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GEORGE BARNWELL

OR THE

MERCHANT'S CLERK.

MILWOOD AND ZELOTTI DISCOVERING BARNWELL AFTER THE MURDER.

Be warned, ye youths, who see my sad despair;
Avoid lewd women, false as they are fair:
By my example learn to shun my fate:
How wretched is the man who's wise too late!
Ere Innocence and Fame, and life be lost,
Here purchase wisdom cheaply at my cost.

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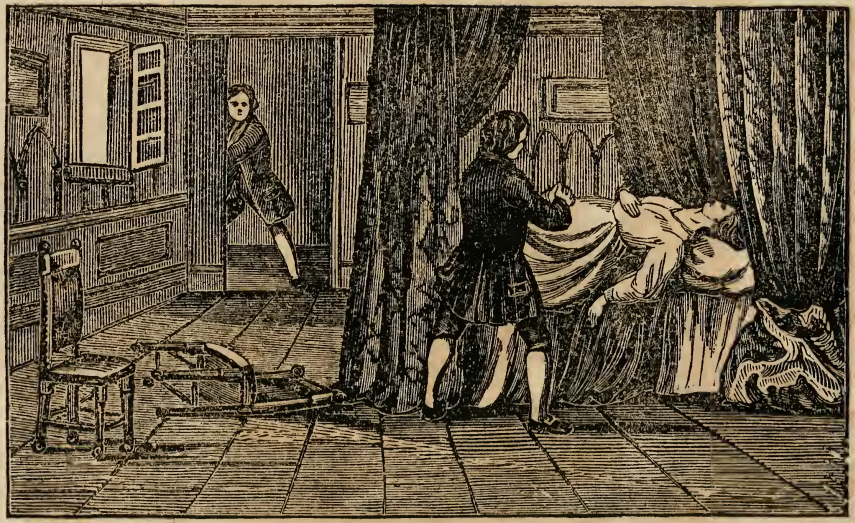
George and his sister visit the Abbey. See page 12.



Mental over the dead body of his wife. See page 30.

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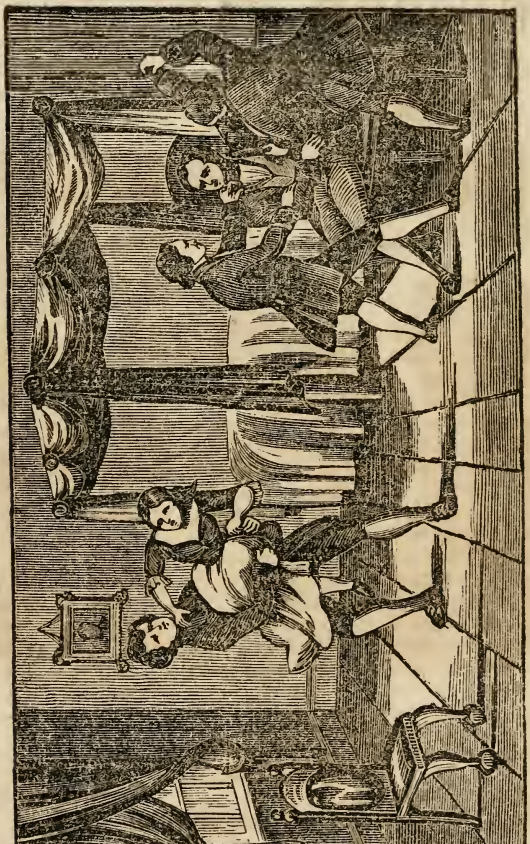

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LIFE OF

GEORGE BARNWELL.

CHAPTER I.

George Barnwell was the son of a clergyman who resided in one of the interior counties of England, and was Rector of Hanworth. At an early age the worthy clergyman had been made happy with the hand of an amiable woman, with whom he had lived in uninterrupted harmony for seventeen years, and this marriage had been blessed with two children, a son and a daughter, George and Eliza.

George had arrived at the age of sixteen, and Eliza was somewhat younger, when a severe illness seized upon the health of the rector, and the good man heard with resignation the opinion of his physician, that no human means could save him. Yet, though he felt no pangs of guilt, no dread of future worlds, though perfectly resigned to die, there were attractions, whose resistless force still held his wishes for longer life; for around his bed knelt the wife and children of his love, and, before his eyes should be forever closed upon these dear objects, his heart beat anxiously to be assured that they should not be thrown unprotected upon the world. "I could have wished he had arrived," murmured the dying man, "I should have retired from the scenes of this life with less regret, had I committed these my only cares to his kind keeping. But his own good heart will suggest to him all I could have said."

It was his brother to whom he alluded, who entered the room as he was speaking. His appearance changed

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the scene.—Mrs. Barnwell, Eliza, and George, clung round his knees, and seemed to hail him as the messenger of joy: but it was a momentary joy. Sir James had been anxiously expected, and his arrival, as it ended that anxiety, occasioned a momentary impulse of pleasure. But no sooner did the melancholy cause of his visit recur, than silence and sorrow ensued.

Sir James, after a pause, approached his dying brother, and an affecting farewell took place. Tears rolled down the pallid cheek of the worthy rector, as he pressed his brother's hand, and cast a meaning look upon his family. He sunk exhausted on his pillow.

"Think of this world no more, my brother," said Sir James: "from this moment this is my wife—these are my children—and all I have is theirs!"

"My God! I thank thee," exclaimed the rector, and expired.

We pass over the funeral of the rector, and forbear to enter into any detail of the grief of his bereaved family. Sir James was, perhaps, the individual among them who, possessing the least sensibility, was the least affected; not that the knight was deficient in feeling, but he was older than Mrs. Barnwell, by at least ten years, and had spent the greater part of his life in a counting-house, and on the Royal Exchange; which, though certainly the schools where industry may learn an honourable way to its rewards, cannot be deemed the most favourable soil for the growth of those sensibilities which, though not virtues themselves, are at least Virtue's faithful allies.

"I am a lone man, a bachelor," said the knight, "and, by the blessing of Heaven upon honest endeavours, have accumulated more than I shall ever spend. I promised my brother to protect his family, and will do so. After the loss you have sustained, my sister, I am sure your inclination is to quit this place as soon as possible. I insist on a visit to my old mansion, where we may leisurely discuss the plan I have in contemplation to make us all happy."

A proposal so perfectly congenial to her wishes was readily accepted by Mrs. Barnwell, and, in a day or two the family accompanied Sir James to his seat at Hartsgrove, an ancient and castlelated building, surrounded by a park, and adorned with improvements that were usual to the residences of the wealthy in the last century. At the hospitable table of Sir James, the widow and her children necessarily became acquainted with such of the neighbours as were the visiters of their protector, and a gentleman by the name of Mental took a lively interest in the conversation of George, and eventually an intimacy was formed between them, in which the former gave advice that was respectfully received by the latter.

"For the present," said George one day, in reply to a question from Mental, "I am the inmate of my uncle's house, but in a week or two I shall quit this place for London."

"For London! what takes you to that focus of corruption and folly?" said Mental.

"My uncle has most generously," replied George, "entered into a treaty with a merchant there, a share of whose concern is to become mine, after the usual initiation."

"Call upon me, Mr. Barnwell, to-morrow," said Mental, after a short pause. "I feel a lively interest in your welfare; and if you can trust yourself with me for an hour to-morrow, I will venture to say you will not regret it. Will you come?"

Barnwell promised.

"Now is that important period of your existence," didactically said Mental, "that will gild with pleasure, or darken with discontent, every scene as yet behind the veil of time.—I shall expect you to-morrow, young man."

"I shall not fail to come," answered George.

CHAPTER II.

Adjoining the seat of Sir James stood the remains of a monastery, a mouldering and moss-covered relic of past ages. One of the aisles of the chapel still remained in its original state, and afforded conversation matter for all the lovers of romance in that neighbourhood. Spectres of all sizes and shapes, of either sex, had been seen by moonlight or torchlight, at different times, playing most singular antics in the old abbey chapel. At one time it was a nun, at another a monk; and now assumed the terrific appearance of a fallen angel; and now danced along the aisle, in form most beauteous, to music most enchanting.

This haunted abbey was frequently the subject of conversation at Sir James' table; some expressing their entire disbelief in ghosts; others remarking that they did not implicitly believe all they heard of the kind, nor yet would they obstinately deny their belief. George's sister, Eliza, whose modesty did not permit her to trouble the company with her observations, treasured in her memory all that, from time to time, was said concerning the abbey, and one night had the following dream in regard to it.

She dreamed she was in the abbey ruins, and was just entering the haunted aisle, when a tomb, which stood at the entrance, seemed to rock at her approach. Whilst hesitating whether to advance or retire, the tomb became enveloped in ascending vapour. In a moment the abbey echoed the *groans of one in the agonies of death;* and, as the vapour dispersed, there appeared kneeling on the tomb a most beautiful female, naked to the waist. Her eyes were swollen with weeping, her hair was dishevelled, and from her wounded breast blood trickled, whilst her hands in vain attempted to remove a dagger, whose fatal point was buried in her bosom. Eliza's attention to the spectre was so intense, that she did not notice the form of a man who stood contemplating, with smiles, the

agonies of the female, until the sound of a harp, which he touched in a rapid manner, aroused her. His figure was handsome, his complexion a dark brown, and jet black hair curled in ringlets on his forehead: his voice, which accompanied the harp, was melodious. Listening to his lively strain, Eliza was smitten with horror and astonishment at the following rhapsody:

Flow softly—gently—vital stream;
  Ye crimson life-drops, stay;
Indulge me with this pleasing dream,
  Through an eternal day.

See—see—my soul, her agony!
  See how her eye-balls glare;
Those shrieks, delightful harmony,
  Proclaim her deep despair!

Rise—rise—infernal spirits, rise,
  Swift dart across her brain:
Thou, Horror, with blood-chilling cries,
  Lead on thy hideous train.

O, feast, my soul—revenge is sweet;
  Louisa, take my scorn;—
Curs'd was the hour that saw us meet,
  The hour when we were born!

Scarcely was the last stanza sung, when the trembling Eliza awoke from her dream; doubting, for a considerable time, whether what she had seen or heard was not reality. Just as she had overcome the impressions arising from so horrible a vision, the night wind wafted by the casement of her chamber the tone of an instrument, so similar to those she had heard in fancy, that, starting up in her bed, she drew aside the curtain, under an apprehension of beholding, awake, the vision of her sleep.

The chamber was in total darkness; but the same sounds were repeated; and, hearing them now more distinctly, her heart sunk with terror at the certainty. She determined to quit her bed, and, feeling her way to the window, opened it. The same sounds were

heard again, yet more distinctly, and she was convinced they came from the abbey ruins. She bent her eyes towards the spot whence they issued: in a few moments all was silence, and she beheld a lighted torch borne along the ruins, but the night was too dark to discern the person that carried it.

Returning to her bed, terrified and astonished, she began to reason with her fears. That the music was not imaginary she was convinced; and that its influence (added to the impressions she had received from the various dark tales she had heard related of the abbey,) had occasioned the vision, she no longer doubted; yet not less strange appeared the reality than the vision. For what purpose any one could ramble among the mouldering tombs of the abbey, she had yet to learn.

On the following morning she, according to her usual practice, unburthened her mind to her brother. "There is a very singular coincidence of your dream with the music you really heard," said George. "Do you remember enough of the place you supposed was the abbey, to compare what you saw in your dream with the ruins themselves?"

"Beyond a doubt," said Eliza.

"We will take a ramble there in the evening," said George; "and should there be a tomb in the aisle resembling that in your dream, I think we should relate the whole to Sir James. *Murder* is a crime, above all others, offensive to the Deity; and if ever the Omnipotent displays a miracle, I can conceive nothing more likely to occasion his supernatural interference than detection of so foul a crime."

That evening, Eliza, with a palpitating heart, accompanied her brother to the haunted aisle. The impressions of terror revived in her breast as they entered the avenue from the park, which led directly to the ruins. They were at the entrance of the aisle—Eliza trembled—

"Stay," said George; "it is dark, and we are far from the house. A thought strikes me—I have little

dread of ghosts—but it is not impossible that this retreat may be the rendezvous of beings less merciful, and more powerful, than mere spectres. Were we to be attacked, our loudest cries would reach no friendly ear. Do you wait a moment behind this old column, and listen attentively. I will go on. Should there be danger, you will hear my cries, (they shall be loud enough,) and immediately run as fast as possible towards the house—it's a straight road, and you cannot miss it."

When George had resolved on any purpose, he always adhered to it. Remonstrance on the score of his personal danger was in vain, and the anxious Eliza clung round the pillar in trembling expectation. A few minutes elapsed—Eliza grew impatient. A few minutes more passed away—no noise was heard—no brother returned. The whole space of time was less than ten minutes—but how much longer it appeared in the reckoning of suspense, is easily conceived.

At length she heard a distant sound of footsteps;—it approached nearer—she left her retreat, thinking to meet her brother; when a form, muffled in a long black cloak, and masked, met her at the entrance of the aisle. She screamed. In an instant George was at her elbow; but the cause of her alarm was gone—vanished, as it were.

"Surely, I cannot be deceived," said George.—"'Twas certainly a man—I saw him most distinctly. A black cloak and a mask were lying on the very tomb you described in your dream, Eliza. As I approached it, a man, who was kneeling near it, started up, hurried on the cloak and mask, and, presenting a pistol, exclaimed, '*I am discovered!*' Ere I recovered from my surprise, he vanished."

"For Heaven's sake, my dear brother, let us quit this place," tremblingly uttered Eliza. "It may be the abode of murderers."

They walked swiftly towards the house. "There are so many singular circumstances combined in this

adventure," said George, "I am determined to relate the whole affair to Sir James."

George, that very night, related the incident to his uncle. "I have heard," said Sir James, "stories of this nature frequently repeated; but, till now, I own, I never paid a serious attention to them. What has happened, however, determines me to take some active measures towards unravelling the mystery. In the morning I will myself see the place, and examine its appearances."

Accordingly, the next morning, Sir James, with several of his servants, sallied forth to survey the haunted aisle. He was supported on his right hand by Mr Sandall, a superstitious clergyman; on his left by young Barnwell. Arrived among the ruins, some minutes past in the most profound silence. Nothing was heard or seen that could justify the most distant conjecture.

"George, are you sure you saw upon this tomb, this very tomb, a mask and a cloak?" said Sir James: "that you also saw a man kneel near this tomb—saw him rise—put on the mask and cloak?—Are you perfectly convinced no part of this was imagination?"

"I am sure I saw all that you have stated."

"'Tis very strange!" said Sir James.

"Very strange!" said every one.—

"Could not this tomb be moved?" said George. "Were we in the forests of Germany, I should be induced to think, from circumstances, that it covers the trap-door of some subterraneous cavern."

"Ay, sir," said Joseph, an old domestic of the knight, "you have hit the right nail on the head now. If I was a magistrate, it should be all pulled down, and dug under; and my life on it, but murder lies at the bottom."

"That can't be done without the consent of the owner," said Sir James, "or some better grounds of suspicion than we have at present."

"Do you not own the ruins, sir?" asked George.

"Not this part of them," said the knight. "All the

land on this side the row of alder trees belongs to the next estate."

"And who owns that?" asked George.

"Mr. Mental, whom you have met at my house.—What do you start at?"

"Nothing, sir," replied George, hesitating; "but—Mr. Mental—is—a strange man."

"Ah God forgive him, if all they say be true," remarked old Joseph, with an expressive shake of the head.

"He is a singular man undoubtedly," said Sir James, "and people will talk. Nobody, it seems, knows who or what he is, or where he came from. But I have heard old men, who remember his first coming here, whisper strange stories."

George was ruminating — After another fruitless search they returned home.

A variety of conjectures presented themselves to the fertile imagination of George, all pointed to Mr. Mental. He now conceived, that the man he had seen the preceding evening was Mr. Mental. He imagined the voice he had heard resembled Mr. Mental's, and built upon these impressions a suspicion to the disadvantage of his character. Quickly again his heart rebuked him for so illiberal a conclusion from a train of mere accidents. He recollected his invitation, and resolved immediately to visit him. Unwilling to awake those suspicions in the breast of another, which he was himself ashamed of cherishing, he determined to keep his visit a secret from the family; and merely observed that, as he wished to take a long stroll, it was doubtful if he should return before evening.

CHAPTER III.

The residence of Mr. Mental was a short distance from Sir James's. It was a large old-fashioned house, containing many rooms. Of these only three were in use. One served as a kitchen and chamber for an old woman, his only servant; a second was a sitting, eating and sleeping room for her master; and the third was a study.

George, being admitted into the sitting-room by the old woman, waited for the appearance of Mr. Mental, who presently entered. George gazed earnestly at him as he entered, but could observe nothing in his countenance that in the least sanctioned his suspicions: there was no embarrassment, but an air of solemn ease, a kind of look that indicated a familiarity with grief.

Mental freely entered into conversation with George, and commenced the story of his past life. He was left an orphan at an early age. He was a thoughtful, contemplative boy, and books were his only delight; the pastimes of other boys his aversion. His bodily frame was weak and delicate. While at the public school at Eton, a relation, who supported him, met with heavy losses in business, and young Mental was informed that he must not think of an university education, but prepare himself to be apprenticed to a trade. At the age of fifteen he was placed in the employment of Mr. Nutting, a grocer; and the menial offices this situation compelled him to perform, were at first particularly grating to a boy who had been led to cultivate higher expectations; but by degrees he became reconciled to it, and could stand behind the counter and chop sugar without a sense of degradation. "But I was often roused," said he, "from a revery by my master, when I have been busy weighing out teas, and at the same time busily employed in the regions of fancy. And, having once caught me in the attitude of study, leaning upon a broom with which I was sweeping the shop, he exclaimed, 'this wont do,

Henry; you seem more fit for a philosopher than a tradesman.'"

"I was about seventeen years old," continued Mental, "when Mr. Nutting, who was a rigid Calvinist, was one evening sent for in great haste to visit a stranger who had lately taken lodging at the next door, and was then at the point of death. This stranger was a man, who, having obtained early in life, the possession of a considerable estate, had given the reins to his passions, and had indulged in every pleasure that a vitiated taste and corrupt principles suggested. On the bed of sickness his heart smote him.

"Chance led him to the house he was in, and the landlord of that house was a strict dissenter, of the same persuasion as Mr. Nutting, whose sanctity and upright conduct had been frequently proclaimed in the hearing of the dying man. He requsted to see him; derived a pleasing consolation from his discourses and prayers, and placed in his breast an ample confession of his crimes.

"There was only one object living, for whom, in his present situation, he felt any concern; and that was a daughter, the fruit of an illicit amour in the West Indies.

"This daughter he had brought up with the true affection of a father, having bestowed a very liberal expense upon her education at a very eminent school in the vicinity of the metropolis, where she then resided as a boarder.

"For this daughter Captain Ellison felt an increasing concern as his own end drew nearer. Himself grasping eagerly at the hopes and promises of eternal happiness offered to him by Mr. Nutting, on the simple condition of believing, he became anxious that his Elinor should share the same blessings, but which he now fully persuaded himself she would never taste, unless converted to the same faith with that which he himself had embraced.

"Such, at length, was the confidence he reposed in Mr. Nutting, that he made a will, by which he be-

queathed an estate in Hertfordshire, and some considerable property in the funds, to his daughter, upon the express condition of her residing with Nutting till her twenty-fifth year, or till her marriage with his consent. So strictly was his will drawn out, that Nutting, who was his sole executor, obtained by it unlimited control over his ward during her minority, and an arbitrary disposal of her in marriage, besides the interest of her property while she resided in his house. The captain died. His daughter had visited him two or three times at his lodgings, and was apprized of his intentions respecting her. A day was appointed for her removal from boarding-school, and I was ordered by my master to take a coach from Hyde Park corner to Kensington, and bring Miss Ellison and her trunks to the Strand. A scene of affectionate tenderness took place as she parted with her governess and young companions. Parting from their embraces, she hurried into the coach. I took my seat opposite to her, and imprinted on my memory a face and form never—no, never—to be erased!

"I will at once pass over many incidents, Mr. Barnwell," continued Mental, "and briefly state that a mutual attachment eventually resulted in a marriage between Miss Elinor Ellison and myself. This was strenuously objected to by Mr. Nutting, and we left his house, and found in a friendly bookseller the rock on which we built our little bower of bliss. His counsel directed, his benevolence aided, his generosity munificently remunerated our labours. He was engaged in a very extensive concern, and found us abundant employment. Elinor wrote a novel, which succeeded well. We published, jointly, a volume of poetry; and we mutually laboured at translations. Competence was the sweet reward of our labours, supplying us with all the necessaries, and many of the decent luxuries of life. We resided in a small but neat cottage at Walworth; only visiting the metropolis occasionally.

"The life I now led was the very reality of that picture which imagination had taught my youthful heart

to doat upon; and yet, possessing this reality, I was not content. When literary compositions became the means of my subsistence, I found it irksome; I fancied it a mean employ of talent to let it out for hire. I grew dissatisfied; I formed a variety of new schemes, which alternately delighted and disgusted me.

"A period however approached, which compelled me to submit to the irksomeness, and even meanness, (as I deemed it,) of my employment. My Elinor bore me a daughter. I wept tears of joy; my heart beat with rapture; for at that moment, sir, I did not dream how many curses, in disguise, I hailed as blessings—I sometimes laugh to think how my silly heart was cheated."

[Here Mental laughed, but in a manner that conveyed the misery and horror of his recollections.]

He continued—

"A year or two marched onwards in the track of time, unmarked by any record of the memory; but about the time my little girl was three years old, and began to prattle, there happened an event which is so firmly printed on my mind's register, that not even the flaming fingers of the fiends of hell can burn the page, nor all the pitying dews that drop from angels' eyes blot out the bloody character!

"But spare me now a task I feel beyond my powers: retire—retire, my young friend—see me to-morrow; and come prepared to hear a tale of horror!"

The anguish of his heart was visible in the struggling features of his face, and he breathed painfully convulsive sighs. George pressed his hand, and retired in silence.

A chain of conjectures on poor Mental's tale occupied his mind till he reached home, when a fresh occurrence demanded his attention. Upon entering the drawing-room, he was surprised at the sight of a harp, a lamp, and a stool, which he had no knowledge of. There was no one in the room—he had found the hall door open, and had entered without seeing any of the servants. Descending the staircase, he met old Joseph.

"O, sir! such discoveries!" exclaimed Joseph. "At the haunted aisle, sir! I discovered them, sir!"

"Discovered what?"

"The music and the lamp, sir. This morning, sir, I was going to the doctor's for some conserve of roses, for the housekeeper, who has got a terrible blight in her eyes, as I take it, by sitting in the garden when the night air—"

"Well—well, Joseph—you were going to the doctor's—never mind what about."

"True, sir, as you say, that's no matter; that's neither here nor there as to the discovery. Well, sir, the nearest way to Doctor Saffron lies through the park, and the ruins; and though I have many times gone round by the road-way for fear, I was determined this morning to go boldly on through the haunted aisle: and so I did; for since our search there, I began to think less of the matter than I used to do. I did tremble a little, to be sure, when I got there; but some how or other, as if Providence had ordered it so, I grew bold when I had been there a while; and, finding myself a little fatigued with my walk, I sets me down boldly upon the very tomb where they say the naked lady sets every night. Now only mind, sir, what great discoveries sometimes happen from trifling things. I had a hat on that was bran new last Sunday; the day was hot, so I pulls off my hat, and lies it down upon the tomb.—Well, when I had rested me, I takes my hat up, and, behold, all the top of the crown was soaked in lamp oil. I was struck very strange, to think how this could happen:—when, lo, and behold ye, I find a quantity of oil, as if it had been spilt upon the tombstone; and I find it had dripped, dripped, dripped, all the way along the *moniment* to a large stone covered over with moss, and beyond that stone not a drop of oil was there to be seen or smelt. Then all of a sudden it came into my head about the light that has been so often seen of a night. And——"

"Enough—enough—" cried George, with his usual impetuosity of temper—"I know the rest, good Joseph,

and will spare you the trouble of reciting it—You moved the stone—and there the harp and the lamp was found—But here comes Sir James."

"The strangest discoveries!" said the baronet.

"Joseph has been relating it, sir," replied George.

"Well," continued the knight—"and what conjectures do you draw from it?"

Mr. Sandall, Mrs. and Miss Barnwell joined them.

"The music that has been heard, and the lights that have been seen, are rationally accounted for, at least, by this discovery," said George; "but the performer of these nocturnal orgies we have yet to discover. I should think, Mr. Sandall, a ghost would not be at the trouble of hiding those things."

Mr. Sandall was silent.

"It seems a strange propensity," said Sir James, "in any man to amuse himself in such midnight recreations. I know nobody I could suspect of such exploits; unless, indeed, the strange old fellow, who is the proprietor of the ruins."

"And who else would you suspect, Sir James," said Sandall; "Is not the man known to be every thing that's bad? Who knows for what infernal purposes he might hold his nightly sittings there? These are strange times, Sir James. I was reading to you the History of the Illuminati, a book which proves the existence of conspirators against all the world; and I believe that this country is not free from them. The place is retired; Mental's house is large; and no one is seen to enter his door by day-light. Now, who knows but he may entertain in that house, or have concealed about the ruins, a gang of these horrible villians, who would go any lengths to overturn all religion and order. I should not presume to dictate to you, Sir James; but you are a magistrate, Sir James; and a hint to a man of your penetration is sufficient.—"

George would certainly have incurred the displeasure of the knight by a hearty laugh at his chaplain, had he not been prevented by a noise in the hall below, and alarmed at the voice of Mental himself.

The rumour of the discovery had spread widely in a short time, and had gathered numberless additions in its progress; till at length the story of a murder, committed by Mental, had actually gathered an assembly of peasantry about his gate, who were pointing to his house, and significantly lifting up their hands and eyes to heaven. The old man had noticed them; and, by piece-meal, had obtained information of the discovery.

Rudely rushing into the drawing room, to the extreme terror of Mr. Sandall and the ladies; his head covered, his hands clenched, his eyes darting anger and revenge—"By what authority, what law—by the show of what prerogative, is my property removed from my own estate, and placed here?" exclaimed he —"Yet do not answer me! I know the tale that hangs upon your lips. But I demand to know the author of those vile calumnies, which the deluded peasantry are blowing round my dwelling. I think I trace the infamous suggestion in the coward countenance of yonder priest," pointing to Mr. Sandall.

"Me—me!" exclaimed Sandall, skulking behind Sir James's chair. "Mr. Mental, I assure you, sir, I have had no hand whatever in the buisness."

"What! can you lie?" said Mental—"O, how ill does it become the man whose lips spout forth the purest and sublimest doctrines ever taught mankind, to retail calumnies! How ill does it become a man of any faith to wound the reputation of his absent fellow; then shrink at his approach, conscious of the injury bestowed, and yet most dastardly disown the blow!"

Mr. Sandall was of a pale complexion; but at this moment his lips were paler than his cheeks, and he could not stand upright.

"Does your reverence know this man?" asked Mental. [It was farmer Cornall.] Sandall trembled. "The tale you have instilled in this man's ear was wanton or malicious. Be it as it may, sir, it shall be refuted. You have spread stories of enchantment, necromancy —nay, of murder! to my prejudice; that I conceal

banditti of Illuminati in my house. Now, Sir James," to the knight—"you are a magistrate—I surrender myself on the charge of this zealous protector of the Christian faith, and am your prisoner till acquitted. Go to my servant, take the keys of every room—nay, I insist on it—search every drawer, examine every paper. I fear no discoveries."

After many objections, Sir James consented to visit the residence of Mr. Mental, as the only means of averting the threats of the labourers, assembled from the neighbouring villages to pull down the house.

Accompanied by Mr. Sandall and George, he walked towards the house; and, at the particular request of Sir James, Mental went with them, smiling as he passed the insulting throng assembled round them, which all the eloquence and authority of the knight could scarcely keep in order.

As they were entering the house, Mental took an opportunity of whispering to George, unnoticed—"You have not tattled, boy?"

"I am no babbler," said George.

"Then whatever you may now observe, be secret still. However strange or mysterious may appear my future conduct, at present, disclose nothing that you know concerning me." Then, squeezing his hand—"Let this memorial sometimes claim a place for me in your thoughts!"—and he sighed heavily, as he slipped a miniature into his hands—George put it in his bosom.

By this time they had reached the sitting and sleeping room—"Here, Sir James," said Mental, "I eat and sleep; 'tis my whim; there's no statute to the contrary, I believe, Mr. Chaplain! That closet will open, by turning the handle of the lock. It contains my wardrobe, a few changes of linen, and a roquelaure. The bayonet and belt, that hang upon that peg, I *once wore* —nay, I *once used!* I drew human blood with that weapon—*Christian* blood, Mr. Sandall;—English blood, Sir James. 'Twas an unhappy cause: but I was then a soldier in the ranks, and endeavoured to annihilate the powers of mind that I possessed, for

they were useless; and my arm sent death where the discretion of my officers directed. It makes me cold to think on it. I see the belt is mouldy, and the bayonet rusty. I wish they were buried in the plains of Quebec. There is nothing else worth notice in this room."

They entered the apartment of poor old Sarah, who was in tears.

"Why—why—Sarah—Come, come, dry these tears—I can bear any calamity better than to see a faithful creature, like you, miserable through my means," said Mental.

"It han't for myself, it's for you I cry. I always thought it would come out.

"Come out!" said Sandall. "What do you mean, good woman?"

"O, the study—the study!"

"Poor wretch!" cried Mental.

"What about the study, good woman?" said Sandall: and then taking Sir James's arm—"Come, lead us to the study."

"*I* lead you to the study!—God forbid! no, no—let *them* that *will*, go for me," cried Sarah.

"This faithful creature has resided with me twenty years," said Mental. "In all that time she has not seen the inside of my study. I spend many hours there alone; and often the whole night, if it rains, and I am prevented from walking in the abbey, which I prefer in fine weather. The circumstance has created a mysterious fear in poor Sarah's brain, and she would not enter the study, I believe, to save her life. But you shall yourselves judge how little cause of terror exists there."

As they were leaving the room, Sarah took an opportunity, unperceived by Mental, to pull Sandall by the coat, and make earnest signs to him not to go. George himself was staggered for a moment by this circumstance—But Sandall seemed petrified with terror.

"Come, Sir James," said Mental, "I'll show you this study."

They moved on. At the door of the kitchen Sandall turned round, and perceived that Sarah had droppen upon her knees, and was in the attitude of praying. His knees tottered as he ascended two flights of stairs, which led to a gallery, at the end of which was a door, which Mental informed them was the study. He opened the door, and the first object that struck their sight was, the lid of a coffin covered with black cloth: there was a plate fixed on it, with this inscription—

"*Mrs. Elinor Mental,*
Died July 12*th*, 1772;
Aged 22."

George cast his eyes curiously about the dim study, and appeared entering in his memory an inventory of its contents.

The coffin lid was placed upright in one corner of the room; on a corner shelf over it was a human skull, in excellent preservation; near it was a writing table, on which burnt a lamp, the shutters of the windows being continually closed; the floor was strewed with books, pamphlets, and newspapers. A chest under the desk contained a large quantity of manuscript. In another corner stood an electrical machine, covered with dust, the cylinder broken. In another, a furnace had been raised for chymical experiments, but had evidently been long in disuse, and was half concealed by broken crucibles and charcoal dust. The general appearance of the place conveyed the most gloomy ideas, and its furniture constituted melancholy memorandums of energies of mind decayed and faded; as tattered banners and broken helmets tell of some valiant arm laid low!

As Mental stood with his arms folded, leaning against the wainscot, Sir James and Mr. Sandall alternately fixed an eye of wonder on the apartment and its mysterious owner. After a considerable si lence———

"Well, Mr. Sandall," said Mental, "you are now in

the very council chamber of your supposed secret committee!—You have my willing permission to inspect any paper, book, or drawer; and if the appearance of this place, or any thing in it, suggests any question, even of curiosity, I will as truly answer it as if I were on oath.

"That piece of elm covered with black cloth, was intended to be buried with the person whose name is inscribed on the plate. I had some regard for her memory, and chose to have it preserved.—'Twas a strange fancy, you may say—Be it so.

"That structure of bone, on the shelf over it, I also kept as a memorandum—It was once the repository of much intelligence; and in those sockets once beamed eyes which glistened with the dews of sensibility, and won the gazer's admiration ere their owner spoke. Yet, sir, there was a something contained within that skull, which plotted and executed the most mischievous damnation that ever blasted the tender blossoms of human hope!—I now gaze upon it by the hour, and wonder where the animating spirit of the deserted cavity has fled?—We can gather no intelligence of this nature, Mr. Sandall. Science is ignorance, and genius madness, as to such information.

"That machine, whose electrical powers have amused me many a year, attracted for a while the powers of my reason; till, having gained a thorough knowledge of its principles, my mind sought novelty. The labours of chymistry kept me still longer in play; till at length research was satisfied. But nothing I can read, nothing I can study, resolves me what I am!—whence I came!—or whither I shall go! This perplexity may, and I know does, trouble me more than many men. I own, too, its inutility—Yet, be the torture of doubts its punishment; and let me not incur suspicions that I do not merit. I know no Illuminati, Mr. Sandall."

"Why, sir, I—I—am surprised at—your odd ways. I—I—have no reason to doubt your good intentions—But it appears strange, that a person of your sense—

that is, it is—as I may say—it is surprising"—stammered out Mr. Sandall——

"Spare yourself, sir," said Mental, "and I will spare you also; for I perceive you are not such a being as a man of any strength of *mind ought* to be offended with. Therefore, though you are the means of *again* unsettling me—the busy meddler that once more drives me from a spot I chose to die on—yet I, atheist as you deem me, can be so much a Christian as to forgive you.

"To you, Sir James, I owe a fuller explanation. In a few words then, sir—I am a miserable man!—whose views of happiness have been almost constantly obscured by unexpected blights and storms, just as I thought them mine: and being of a frame and constitution, perhaps, ill suited to these buffetings of fortune, I find they have inflicted wounds upon my heart which have engendered a disease, whose baneful influence has made me seem the thing you see me—What I *really* am, is my own concern—But I am sorry that, if, by word or act, I have offended you; and I know I have.

"You, Sir James, are happily not troubled with the mania of inquiry, and are content to take this world as you find it. I have too frequently indulged a pettishness of mind at your expense, when I have aimed to decompose that order of things, and system of society, with which I am dissatisfied. Let me, then, make you the only recompense I can, by a solemn and sincere assurance, that what I have frequently uttered in your presence has been the offspring of a distorted fancy—a sickly heart—a feverish, giddy brain.—Let me assure you, sir, I am no wiser man, because I can detect an error in another's creed—I am no happier man, because I laugh at other's hopes of future life and bliss. No, no, sir; I know now less than when I was a boy: the learning and the sciences of men have but confused the simple thoughts of nature; and as to happiness—Ha!—ha!—ha!—(grinning horribly)—this

world affords me no prospect of peace; and as to futurity, my doubts obscure all hope.

"Thus much I owed to you, Sir James; but the suspicions of this reverend gentleman are as groundless as they are mean, and unbecoming that faith which teaches charity!"

Sir James apologized. Mr. Sandall bowed, and stammered; and, after examining a few empty apartments, they retired.

On their return home, the knight published Mr. Mental's innocence, and sent a servant to his house with the articles found in the haunted aisle.

CHAPTER IV.

Towards evening on the following day, as George was sauntering near home, a post-chaise passed him, in which were Mental and his old servant.

At the lodge gate the porter delivered him a packet. Concluding it came from Mental, he hastened with it to his apartment, and broke the seal. On a slip of paper was written the following note—

"The events of yesterday drive me from a retreat, in which I had hoped to die. I shall see you no more till we meet in London—In that polluted place I shall awhile reside—I shall discover your abode, and will not fail to see you.

"In the meantime, I have hastily composed, for your perusal, the sequel to my melancholy story. You will perceive what a blank there is in my affections—how cold and empty a space my bosom has become. Sometimes I think, that if the glow of social feeling is ever more to warm my frozen breast, it must be kindled by yourself. But if my story fail to gain the tear of sym-

pathy, I trust it may at least be beneficial to you as a warning.

"Farewell. May the present tranquillity of your breast never be exchanged for the torture that racks the bosom of MENTAL."

The narrative ran thus—

"There resided near our cottage, at Walworth, a youth of fortune, who visited us, and became our intimate acquaintance. I soon discovered in him uncommon genius and ardent feelings.

"This youth, with about ten or eleven others, of similar dispositions and talents, had formed themselves into a club, for the purpose of candid and free inquiry —I had the honour of being invited a member.

"My friend possessing, from his fortune, a considerable influence with the club, his patronage procured me a respect I otherwise was not entitled to; and I was elected their secretary. I say nothing of our labours, which were published at a joint expense, and circulated with a zeal beyond description.

"Experience, however, has taught me one truth, that every structure of morality or philosophy we raise upon the ruins of those we overthrow, is unable to stand the test of practical experiment, and are, many of them at least, greater nuisances in society than those we attempt to destroy.

"As secretary of this society, my house became a sort of rendezvous for its members. My Elinor and I were delighted at our good fortune in this respect, as it afforded us many hours of rational amusement in the conversation of men of taste and letters.

"Among others was a celebrated painter of that day. He had a person of manly beauty; a countenance expressive of the most tender sympathies; his manners were engaging; his converse truly captivating. We delighted in the company of Mr. Linmore, and he seemed to receive an equal satisfaction in ours —His gratitude for the humble entertainment our roof afforded him was beyond all bounds. His paintings

were the ornaments of our rooms, and the testimonies of his favour

"We passed the greater part of a year in a state the nearest to bliss I ever saw on earth. Fortune seemed determined to heap her favours on us all at once; for in the course of this period Mr. Nutting, the grocer, died; and, smitten with the injustice of possessing the fortune which Elinor's conduct bestowed upon him, on his death bed made a will, by which she regained her right to a property, that made us completely independent.

"Now, mark the fickleness of fortune. Just as the sun of prosperity was ascending the meridian, and his beams had gilded a wide and beauteous landscape of enchanting hopes, a little sable cloud sprung up, and floated in a corner of the hemisphere. It sailed towards my dwelling. It swelled as it drew near; it increased till the sun was hidden from my sight; and then, descending, burst upon my head, overwhelmed all prospects of the hopes I had beheld, and left me nothing to contemplate, save the frightful desolations of despair!

"To dwell as little as possible upon a subject that shakes every nerve with horror at its remembrance, know, then, young man, that this specious moralist, this zealous friend, this smooth-speeched Linmore, proved himself a most consummate villain.

"He came to our dwelling, and found Peace, Innocence, and Love, its inmates; he saw as fond a pair as Nature ever designed for each other's bosom. What, then, was that principle that could excite within his breast the horrid purpose, the execrable, vile design, to mar such bliss? With the dissembled visage of benevolence, he must have borne a heart that languished for the murder of his species, or how could he deliberately have planned the destruction of one of Nature's noblest works!

"You have not yet felt the influence of love; you cannot, therefore, feel like those who have. But, if you shall ever love—if all the mental energies, and all

the glow of passion, that constitute the essence of existence in your nature, ever centre in one point, fix on one object—you may then conceive what I experienced, when, all at once, I found that object vanished. O! what a chilling void I felt in my breast! Such it became, soon as suspicion pointed to her dishonour;—but, when I tell you —— Alas! my poor brain cannot bear the recollection!—— * * * * *

"With trembling hand I take my pen once more.—Circumstances awakened in my breast a jealousy of Linmore, and determined me to watch his every emotion.

"Start not:—my jealousy was well founded—The damn'd darts of the arch fiend succeeded—Virtue was subdued, and treacherous lust triumphant —— O! that the lightnings of heaven had blasted him or me, ere I had seen the smiling murderer!

"One fatal day, when, having pretended a day's absence, I concealed myself at home, I saw her enter her chamber, and in a few minutes Linmore followed. This was conviction; and all the powers of my reason fell beneath the impulse of revenge—My hand instinctively grasped a dagger that was near me—I rushed into the room, and, aiming a just reward at the seducer's heart, the cursed villain shrunk from my vengeance, and it fell on the poor, lost Elinor!

"The coward fled, and I was discovered kneeling by my bleeding wife, the fatal weapon still buried in her breast.

"In that moment of agony, I knew not what occurred. I was dragged by force from the body, and confined, in my own house, under the care of some medical gentlemen.

"In a few days my senses returned, and I was able to give some account of the horrible transaction; which being corroborated by the circumstance of Linmore's flight, the coroner's jury returned a verdict, accidental death, and the remains of my poor Elinor were interred.

"Though I was not then deemed a madman, my

reason had sustained a shock it never has perfectly recovered.

"When I looked back upon the happiness I had enjoyed, and gazed upon the dreadful wreck around me, my blood now chilled to ice—now flowed like burning lava through my veins—and my affrighted reason fled at the horrid view! My adoration of the object would scarcely allow me to believe her false, and my love seemed unaccountably increased!

"She was then in her coffin—I flew to it—I threw myself in agony upon it; nor would I quit it, till my strange wish was gratified, in preserving the coffin lid, as a memento, to be ever in my sight. Another was accordingly made.

"After her interment, I secluded myself some months from the world. Human nature suffered a degradation indeed in my estimation. I grew disgusted with mankind, and with the system of the moral government of the universe. Yet I had not then experienced more than half the misery I have since endured.

"My cottage at Walworth now became frightful; every room reminded me of some happy scene! and brought to mind my Elinor! They brought to me my child—O, how it chilled my blood to look at her! I thought her little eyes seemed to dart reproach and vengeance on her mother's murderer—I could not bear her presence!

"After some time I determined to quit not only Walworth, but England; and went to reside in America.

"I placed my daughter under the care of a respectable person in the neighbourhood; made an ample provision for her education; and, in case of my death, had left her the whole of her mother's fortune.

"Now, sir, let your imagination, and your pity, follow a heart-broken man to another quarter of the globe; and even there you will find that misery pursued him.

"Scarcely was I settled in any degree of intimacy with any one of my fellow creatures, and had begun to feel something like humanity reviving in my heart,

when those troubles, of which the world knows so well, broke out.

"My friend was an American by birth, and sided with Congress. My opinions, though they did not coincide with the rulers of England, yet compelled me to resist the entreaties of my friend to take up arms against my mother country. I would have remained neuter, but that could not be; and thus, soon as my heart began to cherish a love for my friend, my arm was lifted to destroy him. 'Twas then I was compelled to wear and use the arms you saw at my residence. But let me hurry in oblivion my country's shame!

"One instance of retributive justice I met with in America, which, in some degree, reconciled me to the notion of a Providence. The villain, Linmore, who had made that country his refuge, was in prison when I arrived there, implicated in a charge of murder. He was one of a party where murder ensued, in consequence of an unlawful project. He was executed, and dissected. I offered any price for his skeleton, and did actually obtain the skull, which you saw in my closet.

"Disgusted with the scenes which passed before me, I embraced the first opportunity of returning to England, and bought the estate of the abbey, near your uncle's.

"This retreat suited me well. Its distance from any other dwelling, the romantic scenery around it, and the gloomy walks among the abbey ruins, accorded well with 'my soul's sadness.'

"The old woman I retained as my servant had lived some time in the house before I bought it. When I received the little furniture I wanted, I deposited the coffin lid, and the human skull, in my study; and from that moment the poor woman resolved never to enter it. Here I had proposed to end my days of disappointment and remorse.

"Time will not now permit me to describe the state of my troubled mind.—Shook to its foundation was my faith in all revealed religion. I employed whole nights in the painful study of metaphysics, with no

other reward than a confirmation or increase of doubts. Resolving to give over every other pursuit of that nature, I flew for amusement to chymistry, electricity, anatomy, and grew tired of each.

"Hating the sight of human beings, I generally kept close at home all day, and walked among the ruins when others slept.

"Among a few other memorandums of my former happiness, I reserved the harp discovered in the old aisle:—it was my Elinor's delight!

"Annexed to these memoirs are several pieces of poetry, which I composed in the calm silence of midnight, at the abbey—they all relate to my poor Elinor, whom I have there called Louisa!

"Thus rolled away year after year. I only saw the active world through the medium of report. Newspapers, pamphlets, reviews, and various publications showed me the bustling scenes of men, on which I gazed an unconcerned spectator.—Yet there was still one object in the world, for whom my heart felt a glowing interest—my daughter! My young Elinor often started to the vision of my memory, and painted me with the dreadful anticipation of her fate in such a world of treachery and wo.

"I heard frequently from her governess, but I could never bring myself to see her. The accounts I received were, with little variation, satisfactory, until her eighteenth year, when, all at once, a letter came with tidings that, without any known cause, she had eloped!

"Any attempt to describe my feelings at this intelligence were vain. I reproached myself as the author of her guilty fate, in having abandoned her education to strangers.

"A severe illness followed this intelligence, which threatened my dissolution.—Every effort to discover her proved unavailing. Where she is, or whether she exists at all, I know not. Thus misery weighs down my declining years; and yet I live—live in torturing suspense as to my child—in dreadful doubt as to her fate. Will you, then, not pity a miserable old man,

almost distracted, and commiserate his fate!—Talk of him as little as possible; but when his name is mentioned, do that justice to his story which these memoirs enable you.

"In London I shall see you; till then, farewell, youth. Thy breast is pure—thy slumbers are sweet!—May they ever be so. Farewell. MENTAL."

CHAPTER V.

THE departure of Mental (considered as a flight by many) was soon buzzed about the country, and various stories were circulated concerning him. George felt his heart warmly interested in the fate of so unhappy a fellow-creature. The tender-hearted Eliza, and the benevolent Mrs. Barnwell, to whom he had communicated the outlines of the melancholy tale, united in commiseration for the sufferings of a man, whose life, almost from infancy, had been marked by disappointment and sorrow.

At this period a letter arrived for Sir James, from Mr. Freeman, a merchant of the old school, to whom the knight had written concerning his nephew. Its contents ran thus:

"MY GOOD OLD FRIEND—Yours of the 17th ult. came duly to hand. Your generous proposal on behalf of your nephew is such as becomes Sir James Barnwell. You know that, of late years, I have left the labouring oar in the hands of my godson and partner, Mr. Francis Emery, who also married my ward, Georgiana Ruby. He is a man who will, one day or other, hold up his head as high as any merchant on 'Change. He is the confidant of the Minister, knows every thing before other people's eyes are open, and lets nothing go by. To be sure, I am told his establishment is

showy and expensive; but you know, my good friend, that in our own time there was no fishing without a bait. Emery knows what he is about; and though I have not been in town these six years, he sends me such accounts that make me as easy and as comfortable as if I looked over the leger every night. Besides, is not my interest his interest?—tell me that, say I, when people would be putting me on doubting and mistrusting.—Sometimes I think of withdrawing from the concern altogether; but then I think of my dear Maria, who grows the very image of her poor mother, and is the delight and comfort of my old age, and deserves every shilling a father can bestow; so that for her sake I keep on—But I fly from the subject. When yours came to hand, I wrote him thereon; strongly recommended the youth, and enclosed your overtures. Now, as an old friend, I remit to you his answer, which will be sufficient directions for your proceeding. Wishing every success to the young man, and every happiness to yourself, brings me to a close. So I remain your well-wisher. FRANCIS FREEMAN."

Mr. Emery's letter was as follows:

"DEAR SIR—I hope it is unnecessary to repeat, that your wishes will ever be considered by me in the nature of commands, which it is my duty to obey; besides, I perfectly agree with you that Sir James's proposal is extremely liberal; three thousand pounds down, and seven when the young man is admitted to an eighth of the profits, considering he is to take an active part, is an offer, in my opinion, not to be refused. As the nephew of Sir James Barnwell, I think he should domesticate with me; and as your friend, sir, I shall certainly treat him with every respect:—we shall therefore be happy to see him in Portman Place as early as agreeable to himself. There are favourable reports from India; but, as I intend writing upon business to-morrow, shall make my present letter a domestic one. Will you never accede to the petitions of Mrs. Emery and myself, and trust your Maria with us for a winter?

You should, indeed, sir, consider her age—nineteen, you know—and allow her some of those pleasures so naturally looked for at her time of life, and which the metropolis alone furnishes. Charlotte adds her entreaties to our requests, and we all unite in every good wish to you both.

"I am, dear sir, gratefully and truly yours,

"FRANCIS EMERY.

"FRANCIS FREEMAN, Esq.
"Oak Hall, Yorkshire."

The discourse that followed the perusal of these letters was interesting; in which the benevolence of the worthy knight, and the gratitude of the Barnwells, was warmly delineated. That day week was fixed for the departure of George.

"The scenes in which you are about to perform a part, my dear George," said Mrs. Barnwell, "are of a complexion that dazzle and intoxicate the mind; and you will have occasion frequently to recur to those principles for direction; let me hope you will ever make them your guide, and then, I am persuaded, I shall never blush at the mention of my son."

Conversations of a similar nature frequently took place till the day of departure arrived, when George, with abundant proofs of the liberality of his uncle, quitted his hospitable roof, which still remained the asylum of his mother and his sister Eliza.

Now, for the first time in his life, George entered that great metropolis—London! For the first time he breathed the fashionable air of Portland Place, where Mr. Emery resided. He found in Mr. Emery, instead of the plain man of business, a gentleman of the most elegant deportment, dressed in the extreme of fashion. The house—furniture—liveried servants—delicacies of the table—wines—in short the sumptuousness of Mr. Emery's establishment throughout, awakened no little surprise in the feelings of George, so contrary was it to what he had always concluded the life of a London merchant to be. Mrs. Emery and her daughters were

ladies of the extremest fashion, and, it being but the commencement of the season, were seldom in town, but passed most of their time at a place a few miles from the metropolis, called the Pavilion.

George found himself established in Mr. Emery's house in the capacity rather of a private secretary than a clerk. Instead of being confined from an early hour in the morning till late at night, in posting ledgers and copying invoices, as Sir James had taught him to expect, he found that the sons, or nephews, or cousins of merchants, who threw a capital into the firm, underwent no such drudgery, which is consigned to boys who had learnt to write fine hands at charity schools. At about eleven o'clock, George usually went from Portland Place to the counting-house, Broad Street Buildings, where Mr. Drudge, the *fagging* partner, resided. Any communications of consequence, between Mr. Emery and Mr. Drudge, were conveyed by George; as well as papers that required the signature of the former, who seldom visited the counting-house himself. From Broad Street Buildings to Batson's coffee-house was a regular one o'clock walk for George, where he met the rich Jew brokers, and made Mr. Emery's proposals for the barter of bullion, consols, omnium or lottery, according to previous instructions.

Such a slender portion of employ left void a large space of time for his own inclination to fill up. A well stored library was his usual lounge after dinner, and in the evening he amused himself with music or drawing, or in writing letters to his mother and sister.

New scenes now opened. The reign of dissipation commenced for the season by the permanent arrival of Mrs. Emery and her daughters from the Pavilion. "Well, how do you like London?" commenced Mrs. Emery. "Isn't it delightfully charming? What do you think of the theatres? Which do you like best, Drury Lane, or Covent Garden? Have you seen Parisot? have you heard Banti? O, pray, Mr. Barnwell, do me the favour to write a note to the Countess of Codrington, to say we

are come to town, and mean to be at the opera to-night; and do me the favour to write to the Duchess of— but no, now I think of it, it will be quite delightful to take them all by surprise. Come, Emma, come Charlotte," looking at her watch, "we have just time enough to drive round the parks before we dress." And away they flew, leaving George in a perfect state of astonishment at their levity. At dinner he saw them again, and more particularly surveyed Charlotte and Emma. They were mere fashionables; their countenances rather pretty than handsome, without any traces of intelligence or sensibility. As they were reputed fortunes, they were not without admirers, and by the attention of Lord Morley to Miss Emma, and the Rev. Mr. Eastwood to Miss Charlotte, George easily discovered the favourites of the day.

The hour for the opera arrived; the carriages were ordered; each of the favourite lovers handed his idol to his own chariot. Mr. Emery's was reserved for Mrs. Emery and her new friend, George, of whom she affected to be extravagantly fond, and kindly undertook to lead him through all the mazes of the high world. The opera was extremly crowded, and George was absolutely overcome by the strength of the new impressions which so sudden a blaze of splendour created. Susceptible to the charms of music, while all the rest were busily nodding and chatting to each other around the brilliant circle, George stood absorbed in exquisite sensations. A titter aroused him. "In the name of wonder," cried Lord Morley, "what have you found so petrifying?"

"Why, child," said Mrs. Emery, "you have used an attitude in the wrong place."

"Possibly," said Mr. Eastwood, "this is Mr. Barnwell's first appearance in this character."

George assented.

"O, monstrous!" exclaimed Mrs. Emery. "A month in London, and not one night at the opera! How can you possibly have amused yourself? Poor child, you know nothing. I must give a rout merely for your

sake, ask all the world, and introduce you myself. It shall come off on Thursday next."

Every succeeding day now brought with it some novelty. The rout at Mrs. Emery's was as splendid as any in London, and as crowded as her ambition could desire. George was introduced to a numerous host of personages, male and female. Fashion, frivolity, expense, and new scenes of amusement succeeded each other so rapidly that George had little leisure for reflection, and imperceptibly his mind became moulded into a compliance with fashionable life, and his manners assimilated to its modes; yet still the native purity of his principles remained unshaken—honour still glowed in his breast, and sincerity dwelt on his tongue. He had now passed his seventeenth year, though the expression of his features, and his manly person, made him appear considerably older.

About this time Mr. Freeman wrote Mr. Emery that he intended to comply with his request, and permit his daughter to visit the metropolis, adding that he should himself accompany her to town. The agitation of Emery at this intelligence surprised George extremely. Uneasiness of mind became evident in every transaction. He would order his chariot, and forget his orders; he would employ George to copy statements of accounts, which he would alter as frequently as if it depended upon his fancy to arrange the figures. Mr. Drudge, the acting partner, was closeted with him for hours together. Letters after letters were despatched to the Treasury, and anxiety was expressed in his looks, words and actions.

Mr. Freeman and his daughter at length arrived. The latter was a beautiful girl, about the age of seventeen. George, who happened to be with Emery when Freeman's chaise stopped at the door, was struck with his exclamation, as he went to receive them—"He's here, by G—! Then there's nothing for it but deception!" But in a moment, the chagrin of his countenance was concealed by a hypocritical smile of welcome.

"Well," said Mr. Freeman, as he stumped through the hall, leaning on a gold-headed cane,—"here I am, once more in London. Upon my conscience, but you've an elegant house here. Ay, and here are my old acquaintances, Emma and Charlotte. Why, they are grown out of mind; and so fine too—why, Maria," to his daughter, "our country clothes will make our fashionable friends here blush for us. Where is young Barnwell?"

Congratulations and embraces now took place; and about six o'clock the servant announced dinner.

"Dinner!" exclaimed Mr. Freeman: "by my credit, but I'm shocked! What have you not dined! Well, well—I suppose it's the fashion."

By design, Mr. Emery had no party that day. As they were at dinner—"And, pray, how go things now in London. Have sugars advanced as much as was expected?"

"Sir,—Eh—sugars—" cried Emery, and looked significantly at George.

George answered the question.

Mr. Emery, fearful of more questions, began talking himself.

"Have you heard how many millions Mr Pitt wants?"

"No," replied Mr. Freeman; "nor I don't care."

"I beg your pardon," said Emery; "but it will make some material difference to us, that I happened to know to a certainty. The turn of the market hangs on that point."

"What market?" said Mr. Freeman.

Mr. Emery appeared confused.

"I mean," said he, "the funds. You are aware, that during the war, part of our capital would lie dead, were it not for the opportunities offered by loans."

"Why, truly," said Mr. Freeman, "loans or those things, I don't know much about. Merchandise, in my younger days, consisted in imports and exports; a good cargo outwards, or homewards; and I can't say I much like the new sort of merchandise, where

the freight is invisible, and the bills of exchange are abundant. Not but, in my time, if the state stood in need of assistance, the merchants of London could advance their cash at fair interest; but they never made the distress of their country the means of their profit, or degraded the character of an English merchant into that of a money lender!"

"But you must consider the difference of the times, sir," said Emery. "Things are much altered since then."

"I'm afraid they are," said Mr. Freeman emphatically.

After dinner Mr. Freeman, Mr. Emery, and George, were left to themselves. Mr. Emery drank glass after glass till he seemed to have conquered his feelings, and George thought proper to leave them together.

They soon, however, joined the ladies in the drawing room, and were scarcely seated, when Lord Morley was announced.

"Lord who?" cried Mr. Freeman. "Why, you did not say you expected any lords."

"O dear sir," said Mrs. Emery, "they tire us to death with their freedom."

"Either, then, the dignity of a nobleman is diminished, or the consequence of Master Emery considerably advanced," said Mr. Freeman.

A hectic cough introduced his lordship. "My dear creatures," cried he, entering, "am I the first to give you joy—have you heard it—Eh——But I beg pardon, I did not observe—"

Mr. Freeman was introduced.

"What's the news, you tiresome creature?" said Miss Emery. "How can you keep us in such suspense!"

"Any thing of importance, my lord?" said Mr. Freeman.

"News of the first consequence, sir," replied the lord.

"From the continent, I suppose?" said Mr Freeman.

"You are right, sir—from the continent. We totally despaired of such good fortune; for, though we would absolutely not have scrupled sending over a whole *corps* in exchange for him, the *Great Nation* would have still persisted in detaining him, had he not escaped *sans ceremonie.*"

"He is safe arrived, then?" said Mr. Freeman.

"I have seen him," said his lordship.

"Bravo!—Bravo!" cried Mr. Freeman, rubbing his hands. "He is a brave and gallant fellow, and I am glad of it with all my heart; and hope it won't be long before they send him upon another *blazing* expedition against their navy."

Lord Morley stared—"Blazing expedition!—Navy!—You'll pardon me, sir; but, 'pon my honour, I don't comprehend the allusion."

"Why, I'm alluding to Sir Sidney Smith, who you say has escaped from the French."

"Sir Sidney!—the devil!" exclaimed his lordship. "No, Sir, I do not concern myself about any such gunpowder gentry. I—sir—am alluding to that dear, delightful creature—Monsieur Caperonis—the first dancer in Europe."

"Psha!" said Mr. Freeman; "is that your important intelligence?"

"Delightful!—charming!—charming!"—cried Mrs. and the Miss Emery's.

The Reverend Mr. Eastwood now entered the room: his pretty features screwed into a simper—twirling an eye glass in his hand, which was suspended gracefully round his neck by a purple riband; a white cambric handkerchief hung half out of his pocket; his left toe just touched the ground, and he stood the complete image of the most disgusting character in the world—"a clerical fop!"

"Have they imposed upon me, my dear Lord Morley, or is it really true—The Caperonis—is he really arrived?"

The conversation flowed now solely in this channel,

and Mr. Freeman evidently disgusted, strolled out of the room, and Mr. Emery followed him.

The ladies engrossed Maria to themselves; and George could only now and then make a remark. When, however, he had that opportunity, the sense or feeling of his observations was eagerly noticed by Maria, who failed not to contrast them, to their advantage, with the insipidity and impertinence of the rest of the party.

CHAPTER VI.

Mr. Freeman, after spending a week in London, during which time he had inspected the accounts his partners laid before him, returned to his seat in Yorkshire, leaving his daughter Maria in Portland Place.

The Emerys passed away the winter in a round of fashionable follies — theatres — operas — concerts— balls—routs—masquerades, and faro banks. These, at length, yielded their influence to the attractions of summer, and away flew the Emerys to the Pavilion, a beautiful villa, from a design by Wyat, on the bank of the Thames, near Richmond.

To this delightful spot George frequently rode in the evening, and returned to town in the morning; or sometimes would remain there two or three days. The whole family delighted in his company; and though the Pavilion was never without a party of six or seven besides themselves, yet the additional society of Mr. Barnwell was always matter of pleasure. But to none was his converse so sweet, his manners so pleasing, as to the gentle Maria.

Nor was her well cultivated mind, her well grounded principles, her grace, her elegance of manners, and winning softness of disposition, unnoticed by Barnwell. A mutual esteem was the result. It may be

properly called esteem, for it was the homage of the judgment and the heart, unblended with passion: it was the delightful dawning of love; a serene, pleasing sensation of the mind, unruffled by desire.

In their walks, they would ofttimes hear of each other's benevolence from the neighbouring cottagers.

In mixed companies, a smile of approbation from one rewarded the expressions or sentiments from the other. In the library their choice of authors was frequently the same; whilst their private conferences still more fully discovered their conformity of sentiments and taste.

Dividing his time between the Pavilion and Portland Place, enjoying the society of the amiable Maria, with just enough of business to make his leisure more agreeable, George passed the months of this summer more pleasantly than any former period of his life.

The letters he received from his mother and Eliza every week brought him the happiest accounts of their health, and comfortable situation. The world appeared to his glad view a pleasant garden; and blossoms of delight decorated his tranquil path.

Such was Barnwell; when, towards the close of day, about the middle of September, a person muffled up in a long black cloak, inquired for him in Portland Place; and, upon being shown into a parlour, discovered himself to be Mental. He was grown paler, and much thinner, than when George saw him last.

"Are you alone?" cried he.

"Yes," replied George.

"And are you at leisure?—Does no banquet wait for you?"

"None, I assure you," replied Barnwell; "Mr. Emery is at Buxton, and the rest of the family at the Pavilion."

"Is the door fast?—Bolt it—I have a secret to impart."

George began to survey him more closely. His manners seemed even more wild, and his words more like madness, than when he parted with him. He

obeyed him, however, and repeated his assurances that they were alone.

"When I last saw you, I gave you a miniature," said Mental. "Have you it about you?"

"George drew it from his bosom.

"Yet do not show it me!—Confirmation is unnecessary. Put it up—put it up!—O, horrible!"—and he shuddered as if seized with an ague.

Barnwell was affected—"What new sorrow, sir," said he, "afflicts you thus?—May I be intrusted——?"

"Sorrow!" cried Mental; "give it not so soft a name! Fools, women, children, can be sorry. If it rains, if the dews of heaven wet their silks, they are sorry. If a dance is postponed, or a play deferred, or a dinner spoiled, folks are sorry. What, then, but horror is it that a man must feel, who, having murdered his wife, drives his child to perdition!—My Elinor!—my daughter!"

"Have you heard any tidings of your daughter, sir," said Barnwell.

"Look at that miniature," said Mental. "It is the counterpart of that which you possess."

Walking three or four times up and down the room, which happened to be a dining parlour, and drinking a tumbler of water which stood on the sideboard, he appeared, after a while, more composed, and threw himself into a chair.

"It was my intention when you came to reside here, of which I was apprized, to have visited you, but a strange discovery prevented me. Sauntering, one day, through the streets of the metropolis, my eye was attracted by a brilliant show of jewelry and trinkets in the window of a pawnbroker. Among a crowd of other articles, in one corner of the window, were three miniatures, one of which (imagine my surprise) struck me as greatly resembling what I had once seen. Upon a closer examination, not a doubt remained of its being the counterpart of that which I presented to you. The villain, Linmore, in our happy days, painted the

two likenesses. The one was my poor Elinor's portrait—that you now have, Mr. Barnwell; the other was given to the governess of my daughter, to be presented to her, and I know it *was* given her, on her twelfth birth-day.—To see this miniature, then, was to see my daughter, and it brought to my mind the painful recollection of her uncertain fate. I purchased it, and then, with an earnestness that surprised the pawnbroker, requested him to relate all he knew concerning it. He merely recollected that it was pledged about two years previous, by a woman who lived as a servant to some ladies, lodging at a house opposite; the house has since then been pulled down, he added. 'The woman will very often come here,' said he, "and you may, perhaps, claim something from her.

"Day after day, forgetful of every thing else, I waited on the pawnbroker, and, in about a week, was informed the woman had been there, and had left her direction. I at once sought her residence—a miserable one it was—the abode of infamy and lewdness! She told a plain tale frankly. The ladies with whom she had resided, she owned, were of the description I feared—that the miniature belonged to the one who went by the name of Ellen, who had been well brought up, and had eloped very young, from a boarding-school, with an Irish officer. I doubted no longer. Ellen, I persuaded myself, was an abridgement of her own name; and I determined not to rest till I discovered her retreat, if living—her grave, if dead. The clue I gathered was, that, soon after the miniature was parted with, these unfortunate women quarreled and separated. Ellen went with a young nobleman to Bath, and the other went abroad.

"To Bath, the next day, I travelled post; and, by inquiries, found that the poor wretch resided there about six months, and then quitted that place for Bristol, where she opened a little shop with the wages of her infamy, the nobleman having quitted her. Here she resided nearly twelve months, when, having met with impositions and losses, she became involved in

debt, and was compelled once more to seek refuge from her creditors in the crowd of this metropolis, and returned to a miserable traffic of shame! Oh, what a year of misery have I since endured!

"Every place of amusement, every haunt of pleasure, every mart of shame, I have visited. I have strolled whole nights through the streets of London, viewing each female with a dreadful curiosity. But all was in vain, till about a fortnight since, at the corner of Exeter street, in the Strand, I met the woman to whom I first applied. She led me through several lanes and alleys, at the back of the Strand, to a miserable abode, where, on the floor—on the *floor*—was a sight beyond description agonizing! There, with only a thin mattrass between the bare boards and her poor emaciated frame, lay my poor child, breathing out the last sigh of anguish and despair! I knelt by the poor dying object; took her lifeless hand, but in vain searched for the resemblance of my poor Elinor. The agonies of death had altered and deformed the countenance; and in a few minutes, with a groan, she expired!"

Here, with extreme emotion, Mental buried his face in his hands and wept. After a pause, he stated that the poor unfortunate was decently interred, and remarked, that thus far he had acted upon the presumption of her being his child. He had, indeed, but little doubt, when a circumstance took place that rather staggered his belief. To a woman, who had inhumanly thrust Ellen out of doors a short time previous, he applied for information, but she could afford none. "There was a trunk of the girl's," she said, "in her possession, which, upon paying what was owing, he might receive." She believed it full of letters. "I eagerly consented," continued Mental; "and, upon opening the trunk, found it, as she said, full of letters. Among them was a number signed 'Elinor.' They are compositions of uncommon merit as to style, but highly exceptionable in the matter. That these letters were written by my daughter, is beyond a doubt.

They had been sent under cover, and began 'Dear Friend;' but no address was on them. The only conjecture, then, that can reconcile the fact of the deceased having these letters, written by herself, in her possession, is, that they have been returned from the person to whom they were written."

"It *may* be so," said George; "but surely it is not too much to hope, that the deceased, after all, was the friend who resided with your daughter; and that she herself may yet be living."

"Not for the wealth of worlds would I change the certainty of death," cried Mental, "for such a torturing suspense. No—no—no—I will cherish the thought of having laid her in the silent grave, though it be delusion.

"Come with me—come with me—I'll show you the spot where she lies. I'll repeat to you the story of her sufferings; for, Oh, young man, in such a house as this, these lessons are not common. The riot, the mirth, the glitter of guilt alone, you behold here. Come—come to the abodes of the dying, and the graves of the dead, and learn its certain consequences!"

They walked out together.

* * * * *

It was a few days after this visit from Mental, and while the Emerys were yet at the Pavilion, that Barnwell received the following letter:

"Sir—It is with extreme reluctance that an unhappy stranger obtrudes herself upon your notice. The forms of society do not so strongly condemn me as the emotions of my own proud heart, but adversity weakens, even where it does not conquer pride—and I have known adversity!—*Have* known do I say!

"Though perfectly unknown to his son, the Rev. Mr. Barnwell once honoured me with his friendship, and if a countenance, so resembling his father's, may be trusted as indicative of a similar generosity of heart, that son will not spurn the suit of the unfortunate. It is, indeed, almost too much to solicit the favour of a

visit, though the tale I am compelled to relate I should be unwilling to trust on paper. I will venture, then, to beg one hour of your time, whenever it can be best spared from more cheerful occupations, to listen to the distresses of,

"Sir, your most obedient servant,

"E. MILWOOD.

"Berners-street, Wednesday.

"P. S. I shall take the liberty of ordering my servant to call for an answer in the evening."

Curiosity and compassion were awakened by this letter, in the breast of Barnwell. Repeatedly, and distinctly, he read its contents. There was distress, yet delicacy—there was an appeal to his heart through the most fine-wrought flattery. Above all, there was praise to the memory of a father, whose shade he adored. In the warmth of his first impressions, he was going immediately to Berners-street; but the impropriety of such a step soon occurred. This incident occupied his entire thoughts: he formed a variety of conjectures, planned his conduct according to the supposed cases, and as speedily renounced his imaginations as absurd.

That the purport of this visit was to afford him an opportunity of displaying his generosity seemed certain; and he began a calculation of his finances. His uncle had remitted him large sums. His expenses, though great, were judiciously regulated, and his purse was not empty. If, therefore, thought he, a temporary assistance will avail, I shall have the satisfaction of affording it, and surely the writer of this letter cannot be unworthy. Such were the reflections of his inexperience; such the feelings of his benevolent and uncorrupted heart; and he wrote an answer to the letter, appointing the next day, at twelve o'clock, for the interview; and he felt no inconsiderable anxiety till its arrival.

The next day, at the appointed hour, he repaired to Berners street, and was ushered into a very neat and elegant drawing-room. In a few minutes, a lady,

dressed in deep mourning, with a work-basket in her hand, entered. She seemed almost sinking with diffidence, and struggles of wounded pride appeared in her countenance. George rose, and bowed respectfully.

"This condescension, sir," she hesitatingly said—"the condescension of this visit is—is at the same time, the source of so much satisfaction and pain!—that I must request your pardon—but—I really—I!—" And she sunk into her chair, and applied her handkerchief to her face.

Barnwell stood with mute surprise. Instead of the female of his imagination, worn with wo, and wasted with despair—a form and face had bursted upon his view, the most beautiful he had ever seen! Her figure, considerably above the middle-size, was majestic, dignified, elegant; and her countenance admirably corresponded with her person. Dark hair, flowing in luxuriant ringlets on her forehead, and hanging loosely about her neck, heightened the effect of a most delicate complexion. Her dress was simply tasteful, displaying to advantage the exquisite symmetry of her person.

After a pause of some duration, "Pray, be seated, sir," said she, recovering herself;—for Barnwell, unconscious that he did so, had stood silently gazing on the form before him. "How weak are our strongest resolves," she continued; "I had, I thought, prepared myself for this interview, and considered myself fortified against the attacks of pride; but the remembrance of what they *have* been, is among the last things with which the unfortunate are compelled to part."

George, extremely afflicted at her distress, attempted once or twice to speak himself, but failed.

"Many and powerful," continued the lady, "were the struggles I encountered ere I resolved upon soliciting this interview; but the character of Mr. Barnwell, so opposite to the volatile and unthinking youths of fashion, (to whom a story of distress is the source of either spleen or scorn,) added to the very encouraging traits of benevolent sympathy so strongly portrayed

in his countenance, at length emboldened me to take a step I have since, more than once, repented. I have, therefore, to entreat your pardon, sir, for so great a liberty; and I hope you will completely erase from your memory the indiscreet request I have made."

"Madam—I—if I can—if it is in my power—I—I shall be happy, madam—I hope that if there is any thing that—"

Such were the incoherent words of Barnwell, in whose breast pity, which was its constant guest, now mingled its influence with a new and strange sensation;—so strange, so new, as to create a wild alarm not only in his countenance, but in his words and manners.

"I perceive your generous intentions; but I cannot —I *ought* not—to take advantage of so much goodness!—How strongly you resemble your worthy father!"

"You knew my father?"

"Yes, sir, I knew him once.—They were happy days when I knew Mr. Barnwell!—I little dreamt how severe a destiny was to succeed those joyful days. But, alas, how feeble is our hold on earthly bliss—how fleeting our joy—how unstable our hopes of happiness!—Oh, painful to contemplate the picture of what I have been—and view the gloomy scenes before me! Wealth, and friends, and hope, were then all mine. Now, poverty, and enemies, and fell despair, surround me; and the worst that Fate can ordain to mortals is my gloomy expectation!"

Barnwell had struggled to overcome his embarrassment; and, collecting himself as much as possible, he said—"If the calamity which has wrought so unhappy a change, may be communicated without pain, believe me, madam, the confidence with which you honour me shall be respected, by one who has ever felt for the unhappy, but who never felt so deeply as at the present moment."

"My name is Milwood, sir; my family is one of the most ancient and respectable in the county where they reside. My parents both died ere I had attained an

age to be sensible of their loss, and I was taken under the guardianship of my mother's brother, the Dean of St. Mark's. From a long residence in his family, and from his parental fondness, I had imbibed for the dean, my uncle, all the tender feelings of a daughter. The deanery was my native home; and every desire that the young heart knows was gratified as soon as known. 'Twas at the deanery I once was honoured with the society of your father. He was an excellent man."

George bowed.

"I have no particular event to detail," she continued, "till about two years ago, when a distant relation of the dean, who had been some time on a visit at the deanery, did me the honour to offer me proposals of marriage. To this proposal I answered, that I did not feel that affection on which alone I built my hopes of happiness in the married state; and without which, it was my firm determination never to approach the altar! My uncle so warmly espoused the cause of Lord Naresby, as to descend to threats of his displeasure, if I persisted in refusing his proposals. Still, sir, I adhered to my determination. The most insulting and unfeeling motives were attributed to me in rejecting so splendid a match. Lord Naresby redoubled his tenderness and attentions. My situation grew daily more and more intolerable. A faithful servant, who had attended me for many years, was discharged, upon the pretended suspicion of aiding me in an ideal correspondence, which they said I carried on with some low-born wretch, whom I had the meanness to prefer to the man of their choice. Alas! how much were they mistaken, if indeed, they imagined my heart at that time had a preference among mankind. No, sir, not even a friend, beyond poor Mary, whom they discharged, had I in the whole world! Debarred the comforts of society, of reading, drawing, or any other amusement, my mind, unshaken in its resolution, became desperate; and, after duly weighing all the obstacles that opposed themselves to such a step, I determined to quit forever the house that had hitherto been

my asylum. I accordingly escaped from the deanery, and was received by a distant relation, who pitied my sufferings, with every mark of kindness and respect. I have particular reasons, Mr. Barnwell, for concealing, for the present, the name of this lady and her residence. My uncle, the dean, soon discovered my retreat, and wrote a letter filled with indignation at my conduct, and in which he formally renounced me.

"In my new situation," continued Milwood, I was, for some time, as happy as I could wish; till an event —But let me stop in time—if I proceed with sincerity to relate the cause of my unhappiness, I am afraid—indeed, Mr. Barnwell—I am much afraid, the loss of your esteem would be the painful consequence; and Heaven only knows how highly I esteem your good opinion."

"Madam!" exclaimed Barnwell.

"Ay, sir, you may well be surprised!—my face, my voice, are new to you; but not so yours to me."

"Indeed!" said Barnwell. "Where, pray, have you then seen it?"

"No matter, sir—since I now see it for the last time!"

"I hope not!" said Barnwell, with warmth. "Stranger as you are to me, madam, I feel so deeply interested, so much concerned, for your welfare, that, excepting my sister and my mother, I know no person in the world I more ardently desire to serve."

"You are kind—you are very kind!" said Milwood.

"*Can* I serve you, madam?"

"You, *alone*, can serve me; but you *will not*, nay, you *shall not* serve me."

"You speak mysteriously, and look wild. Fear not, I beseech you, to confide to me your sorrows!—my bosom shall be their sacred repository."

"Generous—generous youth!" said Milwood; and, with a seeming unconsciousness, threw her arm upon his shoulder; then, appearing to recollect herself, hastily withdrew it.

Every moment now increased the desire of George to be made acquainted with her distress. He gazed

earnestly upon her face, endeavouring to read her sorrows in her countenance. He ventured to take her hand—

"Dear lady, let me intreat you no longer to delay the recital of your woes. Of whatever nature they may prove, God only grant me the power to remove them, and I shall be the happiest of all men."

"Your generosity of mind, your tenderness of heart, are indeed the object of my admiration! But, alas, my calamity is of so peculiar a nature, that the most generous mind, the most susceptible heart, cannot conceive any thing that can alleviate it. Mine is a silent sorrow, that broods within my own breast. A sigh is its only expression—a tear is its only relief:—no tongue has proclaimed it: no ear has received its complaint. To you it desires to speak—to you *alone* it *will ever* speak: but—spare me—pardon me—leave me!"—And she wept.

How strange is her behaviour, thought Barnwell:—how wild, yet how mournful her countenance! After a pause, Milwood recovered her former serenity, and continued—

"I am to blame, sir, thus to trifle with your time. I will endeavour to conclude my dull narrative, and at all hazards venture to explain the motive of my request to see you.

"My benefactress, whose bounty was my only resource, continued to treat me with the affectionate regard of a parent; my days rolled on in comfort; and my heart knew no distress, till that event to which I before alluded. O God! how shall I relate it!—but it must be told.

"There resided near our dwelling a family of respectability, but not wealthy; they therefore did not visit our house, but we once or twice met in the neighbourhood. Of the father—of the mother—of the daughter, I shall say nothing; but of the son!—Pardon me—Indeed, I cannot proceed!"

"Waive this reluctance," cried Barnwell. "Confide in me as your brother:—you shall find me as tender

of your feelings, as zealous in your service, as if one womb had borne us."

"What do I hear!" cried Milwood with quickness. "Is it possible! Did you say you loved me as a brother!—Happy, happy moment!" She took his hand, and, kissing it with warmth, exclaimed—"My brother—my brother!"

Barnwell starting from his chair, and snatching away his hand, seemed thrown into a delirium; whilst Milwood, appearing to recollect herself, hung down her head, and blushed.

"In the name of Heaven, madam, tell me, who and what you are? Finish, I beseech you, this mysterious tale, and quickly, that I may, if possible, serve you; or, if not, may instantly escape a presence that creates emotions of pain and pleasure too powerful to be long endured!"

"I entreat your forgiveness," cried Milwood. "But go, sir—go—ere you know the misery *you* have occasioned—the storm of ruin that *you* have raised—Go, ignorant of my wretchedness, which to know, would perhaps excite a painful pity in your breast, but no relief to me!—Since to behold me is so painful—"

"I did not say so!" cried Barnwell, "or if I did—"

"I see," said Milwood, "we are both too much agitated. Your surprise, and perhaps your pity, have overpowered you; whilst I—I am the prey of feelings which rack my bosom with torture inexpressible!"

"'Tis suspense alone that tortures me," cried Barnwell. "Your manner—your mysterious words—and the wildness of your eyes, make me dread a something, which I fear—yet ask to know!—You speak of a youth who resided near you—You talk of ruin, of misery, of which I am the author—You request to see me—You desire me to leave you, as ignorant as I came!—Whence spring such inconsistencies?"

"From a source *you* have never dreamt of," said Milwood, with firmness;—"from love!"

Her countenance was now altered from the picture of contending influence to a portrait of determination!

Her eyes were fixed firmly on Barnwell:—she remained silently gazing on his face a considerable time. Barnwell himself was dumb.

"'Tis over!" at length cried Milwood: "I have conquered!—The youth to whom I alluded is—George Barnwell!—Yes! he it is, whom Fate has ordained my destruction! For him I quit my friends, my country—For him I forfeit affluence, and embrace the horrors of poverty, in a foreign and distant clime!—Was it, then, too much to ask the favour of one hour's interview, merely to declare how ardently I love, and how largely I sacrifice to a hopeless passion!

"O Nature!—can I thank thee for the liberal share of personal attractions thy hand has given me, since they have but served to heap upon my head the persecutions of a train that I cannot help despising, while on that heart alone, which I esteem, their influence is too weak to impress even a cold regard!"

Barnwell was lost in wonder! after various attempts —"I do not remember ever to have seen you before!" said he.

"I can too easily believe you, sir."

"And yet, I think, if ever I had beheld such a countenance as yours, surely, madam, I could not have forgotten its interesting traits!"

"Nay, sir," cried Milwood, I must not hear you, if your voice assumes that strain. Do not imagine, sir, my declaration meant to claim your pity! No,—my resolution is fixed as firmly as the decrees of Fate. One moment longer let me detain your ear, and, then, farewell for ever!—Briefly, then—the same persecutions, though from different quarters, rendered the abode of my benefactress as miserable as my uncle's, with this addition of wretchedness—that, in the latter, my heart was wholly disengaged; in the former, your image, your worth, barred all avenues to affection for another.

"The object so dear to me was unknown to my benefactress—to all the world—but myself. My refusals were therefore deemed obstinacy; my persever-

ance became rebellion; and I was at length driven to the dreadful alternative of quitting, forever, the refuge I had obtained, or to approach the solemn altar, and vow fidelity with my lips, whilst my heart would be adulterous forever.

"Such was the choice held out for my adoption: and could I hesitate? No, not for a moment! I waited not to be driven from a home—Voluntarily I departed. —I have remained some time in the metropolis—I determined to see you;—and now will forever quit the country that gave birth to my existence and my woes! —I will seek in some corner of a distant land that grave, which can alone restore peace to my heart, by an oblivion of you!"

She ceased. Barnwell, who had risen from his chair, and was walking about the room, was deeply involved in thought, combating one suggestion of his fancy after another, till his head became giddy.—He threw himself on a sofa, and leaned his head on his arm. Milwood, with the tenderest expressions of concern, took his hand, and pressed it warmly.

"If I have given *you* pain—if I have relieved my own breast at the expense of a moment's uneasiness to you—what a source of eternal regret! Or, if I have rendered myself odious by a declaration which custom condemns, and have erected a monument of scorn in that remembrance where I sought to deposit the pearl of pity—O, how miserable has my folly made me! Say then, only, that you do not despise me—that you do not abhor me—and I will never—never—trouble your quiet more!"

"His heart must be differently moulded from mine," said George, "that can despise, or abhor you, madam. Your confession has so much influence on mine. I would say more—but, at present, let me, at least, entreat you not to quit this place, till I have been favoured with another interview. I have a mother,—I have—"

"Hear me on my knees, Mr. Barnwell," interrupted Milwood; "if you do not wish to drive me to the most

awful crime our nature can commit, grant me my request:—silence, silence, eternal silence to my story. There is not a calamity in life I should so hardly bear, as the discovery of my imprudence! Then swear to me—nay, I will not quit this posture till you do swear to me, that you will not, to your dearest friend, utter a breath, that may betray me!"

"Good God, what do you ask!" cried Barnwell. "In the most trying situation of my life, would you deprive my inexperience of their superior counsel, who love me, and have wisdom to direct me?"

"What counsel can you want?—what is there to determine?" cried Milwood. "By to-morrow's setting sun, I shall be the ocean's charge. All that you have heard will then be only as a vision, that may occasionally ask a sigh; whilst it reminds you, that there is one in the universe, on whom the night will never steal, or the dawn break, without a prayer to nature's Author for your heart's peace! Why, then, should you wish to make her errors tales of common tattle, or give her conduct to the examination of beings, who have not her feelings? Will you deny me this oath then?"

"Rise! I beseech you, rise!"

"Not till I have received your solemn promise!"

George hesitated some minutes; during which time, she held his hand between both her own, and leaned her warm cheek upon it.

"Will you, then, promise me," said Barnwell, "to remain here till to-morrow?"

"By no means!"

"Will you permit me an interview this evening?"

"For what purpose, Mr. Barnwell?"

"Nay, I know not!" cried Barnwell; "but my heart tells me—that I am to blame. I would prevent the necessity of your leaving England."

"*Necessity!*" interrupted Milwood; "'tis my choice!"

"But if—if—" cried Barnwell; and his breath grew short. "Why—why do you wish to restrain me from consulting my friends? I have an important, very im-

portant point to decide; and I dare not trust my feelings with the decision."

"I understand the insult now!" cried Milwood, rising scornfully. "You would insinuate, that, if your relations can find no just objection to my character and fortune, you might condescend to pity me, and *perhaps*, *if*, and *supposing so and so*, you would then offer *me* a love, not the offspring of my creation, but a condescending acceptance of overtures, you may imagine I have made to you! I had conceived your heart a different composition, Mr. Barnwell, or mine would never have been known to you."

"You judge wrong, madam, I assure you! Your candour, your noble-mindedness, have impressed me with reverence, not contempt; and if this new sensation in my bosom be not—But spare me only for a few hours—Permit me to see you in the evening—and if, then, you require the oath, I will most solemnly take it; and till then, not a whisper shall escape my lips concerning you."

After a pause—"I cannot see the necessity for this, Mr. Barnwell. Why should we meet again? Why not immediately separate for ever! But—" pausing again—"since your request is otherwise—be it so sir. I shall expect you in the evening; till then, farewell!"

"Adieu, madam," cried George, and with trembling feet retired.

CHAPTER VII

"LOVE *me!* Yes, she owns it! Nay, her behaviour declares it more powerfully than her words!" exclaimed Barnwell, as he threw himself into a chair in his own room. "What means this swelling of my heart—this quickness of the pulse—this difficulty of respiration?

Can I imbibe a partiality so instantaneously? Are our natures indeed so susceptible? Surely it cannot be! Pity—it is *pity* for Milwood—for her sufferings—that agitates me thus! Then let me send her in writing the oath she requires, and spare her the pain of another interview! and yet—*never* to see her again! Why do I feel a dread at that thought? Suppose she should be already gone? Forbid it, Heaven! Once more—once more, let me behold a form so lovely! What brilliant expression in her eyes! what sense! what animation in her countenance! How happily might I pass my life with such a woman! But then her situation—my own, too! Madness alone can suggest such a thought. She is proud—I dare not offer her pecuniary aid. Where can she go? What part of the globe does she seek? Unhappy Milwood! Would I had never seen you! Would to God I had never seen you!"

Such were the meditations of Barnwell—Milwood absorbed all his thoughts, while her beauteous form floated in the air before his imagination! Never, till this day, had his imagination been heated by the charms of woman!

In Maria Freeman he beheld an amiable companion, whose modesty and beauty, mingled, won the esteem of his heart, and the approbation of his understanding; but in Milwood he saw a far different female. This woman was beautiful in the extreme; Nature had, indeed, been liberal of her gifts, and education had increased the value of her bounty. Milwood had once possessed every thing desirable in the female character; for she once possessed virtue and innocence. But she parted with innocence, and in its stead had admitted, as the guest of her heart, the most accomplished cunning. At an early period of her life she had surrendered all claim to chastity, and, too aspiring to herd with the unhappy class to which she had reduced herself, her strong and towering mind was perpetually busied upon schemes far loftier in the scale of wickedness than the generality of those whose daily infamy is their daily bread. She was systematically vicious.

The present world bounded her views of futurity, and no checks of conscience ever intervened between her inclinations and her deeds. Pity, and all the tender sensibilities which many natures feel, were her inward derision; *but their semblance was perfectly at her command.* How artful was the tale of her sorrows, as she related it to Barnwell. She had, in fact, never once seen his father, or any of his relations; nor had she ever seen Barnwell himself till his arrival in London. But, having learned the very great confidence reposed in him, the large sums intrusted to his care, she was not long in arranging a method to ensnare him within her power. For this purpose, she had spared no pains to obtain the intelligence she had gained concerning his family, and had feigned the story she had related to him, and which contained not one syllable of truth.

Her sentiments, her tone of voice, her gestures, were studied for the occasion; and she was guided, from moment to moment, in the plan she would pursue, by the effect which her penetration discovered she had wrought on her victim. Thus artfully had she prepared the ground-work of her plot; and had thus far succeeded to the extent of her wishes.

The interim, between his departure and the hour at which she expected his return, was anxiously spent by Milwood; and she repented, more than once, that she had suffered him to leave her: a step to which she had consented, chiefly to carry on appearances, and from a persuasion, in which she was not mistaken, of her power over him.

Meanwhile he, for whom her machinations were devised, was planning the means of rendering her happy. Many and various were the resolutions he formed, but all unstable. His heart had admitted a spark, which his reason was too impotent to extinguish; and which was rising rapidly into a flame, of whose influence he was ignorant, but whose warmth he began to discover.

If the imagination of Barnwell was already wrought to a dangerous warmth, the next reception he met with in Berners-street was well calculated to increase it.

On a crimson damask sofa, placed under a brilliant mirror, illuminated by wax lights, reclined the syren Milwood.—A most elegant white dress had superseded the sable weeds of the morning, with a Turkish turban, ornamented with gold cords and tassels. The solemn air of dignified sorrow was exchanged for the most fascinating smiles; and, instead of the reserved and bashful demeanour Barnwell had prepared himself to meet, he was thrown off his guard by the most alluring glances.

She did not rise when he entered the room, but, holding out a most beautiful arm, encircled at the wrist with a brilliant bracelet—

"Mr. Barnwell!" said she, with an enchanting softness—

George approached in the most profound astonishment, and received her offered hand.

"Am I not a strange creature?" continued she. "My trappings of wo, you see, are soon thrown off. But, in truth, I did not think it consistent with the pleasure I expected in your society, to wear the semblance of sorrow."

George was petrified with amazement, and doubted, for a moment, whether the woman of sentiment he had seen in the morning, and the wanton form now before him, were the same. As she still held his hand in hers, she fixed her sparkling eyes full on his face—

"You have an uncommon countenance!" said she. "You are very severe—and yet have great sensibility. You are a compound of the stern and the tender: I scarcely know which preponderates in your nature. You do not lack courage or fortitude; at the same time you will weep at a tale of misery, and the unfortunate are sure of your sympathy. Is it not so? I have studied Lavater. Now, let me try if I am mistaken. Place that harp nearer me, and I'll sing you a ditty about a poor simple maid—'who never told her love, but let concealment,' as the poet says—and so on—Now be silent!"

It is difficult to convey an idea of Barnwell's situa-

tion at the present moment. The feelings with which he had entered the room were changed so suddenly, it seemed the work of enchantment. Pity for the sorrows of Milwood was absolutely forgotten in the bewildered admiration of her charms; and the determination of his reason, as to the steps he should pursue, was lost in the delightful and intoxicating dream of the existing moment.

He placed the harp—and Milwood, changing her features from the wanton to the languishing, gave him the manuscript to hold, while she sung and accompanied a simply pleasing ballad with exquisite taste and melody. The expression of her eyes was perfectly in unison with the words; and her voice uttered the sweetest sounds!—It was a pathetic story, and affected Barnwell extremely.

"There," cried she, "I knew you would weep—at a fiction, too! And will not real sufferings," continued she, in a tender voice, "at least as much affect you?—Ah! Mr. Barnwell—to me only you are insensible! My abrupt sincerity has made me the object of your scorn!—Yes, cruel and insensible, you return the most glowing affection with the coldest disdain."

"Disdain!—Oh, no!" said Barnwell:—"say, rather, admiration and esteem! Where is the being, who could gaze on such charms, and disdain their possessor? How must the heart be formed, that can remain insensible to so much beauty!"

"There are hearts, I fear," said Milwood, "round which the icy hand of worldly prudence forms a circle, that freezes every passion of the soul. There are beings who can love according to a scale of reason, and model their affections by a standard! But I do not—cannot—think so young a heart as yours—"

"Our reason," interrupted Barnwell, "should regulate, not destroy our passions!"

"Charming philosophy!" cried Milwood, with a satirical smile. "And where did you learn that maxim? I should suppose some ponderous folio so says. But have books hearts? No, no, Mr. Barnwell. Ask those

who wrote the senseless lies, what is this Reason, that is so omnipotent? Where is it to be seen?—or who possesses it?"

"Astonishing!" said Barnwell. "Do you, then, deny the existence of Reason?"

"Yes, such reason as the black-letter gentlemen depict. Can Reason quench the thirst, or satiate the appetite of hunger? Ah! no—no! And is the strongest impulse of our natures to be so easily swayed by Reason, then? Why have we passions?—merely to torment us? Oh, infamous libel on the Author of our existence, who has given his creatures all things to enjoy. Well sings the poet—'*To enjoy is to obey!*'"

The air, the doctrine of Milwood, now roused, for the first moment, a suspicion in his mind of her intentions, which startled Barnwell. He sunk into a profound reverie, his eyes cast on the floor. Milwood observed it, and saw the struggle that was rising in his breast. Perfect mistress of her art, she was aware how imperceptibly her bold advances had stolen into his heart, and with a cunning caution restrained her efforts, and changed her operations.

Instead of attempting to continue an argument, at which she well knew he revolted, she touched the strings of the harp, and raised an enchantment of melody; from the slowest and the softest, to the most brisk and lively measures, her fingers swept the trembling chords. The effect on Barnwell was instantaneous. In vain did the enamoured youth aim to repress the rising flame—in vain attempt to resist the maddening impulse of desire!—On the precipice of danger, he was ignorant of his situation. His cheeks flushed, his eyes looked wild, and he fell back on the sofa, overcome with the force of such new and powerful emotions. The syren saw her time. She struck the harp again, and—

> "Softly sweet in Lydian measures,
> Soon *she* soothed his soul to pleasures."

She sighed—she gazed with looks of warmest love—she seemed to yield her soul to her desires—she sunk by the side of Barnwell—reclined her head upon his cheek—pressed her warm lips to his—kisses—kisses—ah! how they thrilled through the excited feelings of Barnwell—he yielded—and that night he remained in the embraces of Milwood!

CHAPTER VIII.

THAT *night!* To the infatuated Barnwell, how mixed were his emotions, when he the next day retired to his own chamber, and reviewed the criminal ecstacy in which the hours of that night had been passed with Milwood. In his innocence of heart, he accused himself with the guilt of *seduction.* Overcome with want of sleep and anxiety of mind, he fell into a slumber.

When he parted with Milwood he had appointed an hour when she might expect him in Berners-street. He had risen from his slumbers, and had just completed his toilet, preparing to fulfil the appointment, when the following letter was delivered to him:—

"Author of my future destiny!—my conqueror!—my husband!—(will you allow the title?)—still dearer name, my Barnwell!—your trembling Milwood throws herself upon your generosity—she trusts implicitly on a heart that has so effectually mastered her own!

"My uncle is in pursuit of me—for worlds, I would not at present behold him. He has inquired for me in Berners-street. I was of course denied. He is to be there again this evening.

"Oh! how I wanted your advice:—Why had you left me? As it was, I was compelled to a decisive conduct. I discharged the lodgings immediately—ordered a postchaise, and drove to Barnet; from thence took

another chaise, and, appearing to have changed my mind, ordered the driver to set me down in Piccadilly.

"I write from the house of a tradesman, whom I have formerly employed; and leave your feelings to express to you how impatiently I wait your arrival! What shall I subscribe myself? Oh! Barnwell, for both our sakes, let me entreat your presence! And let fate play what part it will, I shall ever be

"Your own!

"The bearer will direct you."

He rushed towards the door, and desired the man who waited to conduct him to Milwood. Immediately they met; she ran to him, apparently in the greatest distress of mind, and hiding her face in his bosom—"Oh, hide me—hide me, my dear Barnwell, from my pursuers!"

"Dispel these fears, madam!" said Barnwell. "Your alarms may be groundless—'tis possible you may have mistaken the description of another person for your uncle."

"Oh, no!" cried Milwood—"I have *seen* him. He pursues me, and will tear me forever from these loved arms! Oh, how cruel—how peculiarly cruel is my destiny! Perhaps already he has traced my chaise to this very door, and will soon be here. Let us quit the house!"

Barnwell, alarmed, and greatly concerned for her distress, thought of nothing at the moment but relieving it. "Where will you be safe?" exclaimed he.

"Alas! I know not! But let us this moment quit this place—my trunks may be left here for the present. Come, come!"

She hurried on her cloak, and, leaning on his arm, walked towards the door. They had walked a considerable distance from the house ere Barnwell had sufficiently recovered from the surprise her conduct had occasioned.

"I am faint!" cried Milwood. This aroused him; and, being near the coach stand at Hyde Park Gate,

he called a hackney coach. When they were seated—"Where am I to drive, your honour?" said the man.

Milwood leaning her head against the side of the coach, remained silent—Barnwell knew not how to answer. After a considerable pause—"The case is this," said Barnwell; "this lady is just arrived in town, and we want lodgings—Drive slowly along the Brompton road, and if you observe an advertisement at any door stop there."

The coachman obeyed—They stopped at a house kept by a widow, and Barnwell hired the lodgings at the rate of two guineas a week. Milwood thus placed, in a safe retreat, as she pretended, from her uncle, gradually reassumed her serenity of countenance, and expressed her gratitude to Barnwell in the warmest language, and by the most seducing endearments.

The pretended fears of Milwood, so admirably played, completely answered the purpose for which she had assumed them. Her penetration had easily discovered that Barnwell's mind, if time was allowed him for reflection, would too scrupulously examine the question of propriety. She therefore artfully resolved to take him by surprise.

The apartments in Berners-street she had taken for the express purpose of their first interview, where she had resided but a few days, and had actually discharged them in the manner she had related. The story of her uncle's pursuit was entirely a fiction. Her present aim was to obtain a habitation at the expense of Barnwell; and this, it is seen, she accomplished.

Having thus far succeeded, a pause in her operations was necessary. She now, therefore, dallied with the unfortunate youth, who was the victim of her arts, and evaded all his inquiries as to her future designs. When an air of sadness marked his features, she would sing—when he hinted his wish that they were married, she sighed deeply, turned her head away from him, and talked on some different subject—when he spoke of his friends, she affected the extremest agitation; wept, (for she could weep at will,) and implored

him, as he valued her life, to retain their connexion an inviolable secret, for at least some time to come.

Such were the blandishments with which the syren soothed the regrets of Barnwell, and *another night* was passed by him in her embraces. After this, night after night, for weeks, he was constantly with her completely in the web of her fascinations. In the meantime, the amiable Maria was with the Emery's at the Pavilion. Far from tranquil was her breast. Her mind, endowed by nature with a quick susceptibility of tender sentiments, had imbibed for Barnwell an affection fatal to her peace. His person was handsome, his countenance interesting; but those exteriors had little influenced the thinking Maria. 'Twas the native elegance of his manners, the integrity and generosity of his sentiments, that had gained him so honourable a distinction in her bosom. And it gave her heart pain, the most exquisite pain, when, through the tattle of servants, (which Barnwell never suspected,) his nightly visits at Brompton were made known at the Pavilion. She doubted, she scrupled to believe, that Barnwell would be guilty of intrigue; and yet there was no way of acquitting him, but by supposing he had entered into more solemn and lasting engagements. Either supposition wounded her heart. She grew melancholy and thoughtful; and the struggle of her reason and her love sapped the foundation of her health.

Matters were in this state, when one day Mr. Emery, in a chaise and four, arrived at Portland Place from Buxton. George immediately paid his respects to him in the library. Emery was walking hastily about the room; his eyes were red and swollen—his aspect lowering—his brows knitted—not one trace was left in his countenance of his former ease and gayety. Barnwell was hesitating whether to retire or remain, when Emery exclaimed, "where's my wife?"

"At the Pavilion, sir," George replied.

"Pavilion! Ha—ha!—'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands!" There was a wildness, ap-

proaching to madness, in the manner and words of Mr. Emery that struck Barnwell with surprise and horror. "Write me a note," cried Emery, with a quickness that startled him. "Mr. Emery will esteem himself highly obliged to Mr. Negotiate, if he will call in Portland Place as early this morning as possible."

George wrote the note.

"Take this yourself," said Emery. "See Negotiate, and know the exact minute he will be here."

Barnwell obeyed his orders with promptness, and returned with the intelligence that Mr. Negotiate would wait on Mr. Emery directly. In an hour he arrived. Barnwell was withdrawing when he entered the library.

"Stay," said Emery; "we must have a witness, and you, who already half know my embarrassments, may as well know the whole."

"There, now," cried Negotiate, who was a Jew, "I vas thought as much—embarrashment! embarrashment! And pray, now, Mishter Emery, vat vill relieve your embarrashment?"

"For the present, six thousand will do," said Emery.

"Phew—w—w! Where you think I can scrape so much monish? 'Tis imposhible! Goodt morning—you must inquire furder. But I will tell you one ting—your friendt, the earl, is as embarrash as you. Here! see, Exchequer bills—Exchequer bills—and the market!"

"D—n the market!" cried Emery, furiously. "I must—I will have money!"

"Marcy upon us, how warm you grow! Be quiet! be easy! be calm!"

Negotiate always made it a point to refuse in the first instance, that, by the effects of disappointment upon his victim he might judge of their emergency, and offer terms accordingly. After a variety of difficulties were, at length, despatched, he advanced the sum required, upon the security of the estate at the Pavilion, at an enormous premium, and on a bond to

reimburse stock to the amount sold out, be the price at its expiration ever so disproportionate.

This transaction opened a new scene to Barnwell, and filled his mind with the most serious reflections, in which the peril of his own situation was not forgotten. Every hour it grew more dangerous. A clandestine connexion with a person, of whose family or friends he could procure no sort of intelligence, whose story was mysterious, and in several points contradictory, sat not easy in his heart. His mind was clearly convinced of the folly, as well as guilt, of any further secrecy; and he once more determined to acquaint Milwood that he could no longer submit to a clandestine connexion.

Thus determined to rend the veil, which screened his heart from those to whom its most secret thoughts had been ever open, Barnwell again bent his footsteps to Brompton. As he entered the house, Mrs. Griffiths, the landlady, accosted him. She related that—"this morning, as she was sitting at the window, she noticed an old gentleman, plainly dressed, who walked three or four times past the house with particular observation. At length he bowed to her, and knocked at the door. Upon being shown into the parlour, he bluntly asked her, if she let lodgings; and then as abruptly desired to know the name of her present tenants. When she informed him, "Barnwell, he exclaimed—'Then I am right. Is the lady within who accompanied Mr. Barnwell here?'—Upon finding he knew the circumstance," continued Mrs. Griffiths, "I answered, 'Yes.' He then desired to see her. I went up stairs and told the lady; but she refused to see him—positively refused. We sat talking, and he acquainted me that this *lady* of yours is one of them *despicable* hussies, that ought, in my opinion, to be burnt alive; and that you are only a merchant's *clerk*, and going headlong to ruin."

"*He* told you this?—*He* say this of me?—Impossible!" cried Barnwell; for he instantly concluded it could be no other than Mental.

"Yes, but he did; and much more he would have said, had not your *lady* just then passed the windows, walking in the garden. She turned round to pluck a flower, and so he had a full view of her face. Starting up like a madman, as soon as he saw it, he clasped his hands together, and, striking his forehead, rushed out of the house before I was aware."

"This is all very extraordinary," cried Barnwell—"very extraordinary, indeed!——Pray, have you acquainted the lady with this circumstance?"

"No, not I, sir. The lady, as you call her, must find more suitable companions; and you, if you please, a *more properer* place to *keep her* in."

Barnwell, at once disgusted, vexed, and surprised, left her without a word, and sought Milwood. She met him as he entered the room—

"Why, my dear Barnwell, is your brow thus constantly clouded?"

He answered not, but throwing himself on the sofa——

"I shall never be happy again," murmured he "Oh! Milwood, what a wretch have you made me! I was basking in bliss—I knew not a painful reflection—and now, I can neither consult my friends, nor my own heart——I have grown despicable in the estimation of both!—You have destroyed my tranquillity forever!"

"From you this language, Barnwell!—From you, for whom I have sacrificed not only friends, but fortune—nay, for whom I have sacrificed the delicacy of my sex—and have incurred a shame never to be effaced!——Who is most the sufferer, Barnwell—you, who have shared equally in all the pleasures of our connexion, and, in the world's opinion, have obtained a triumph—or I, who, for my portion of rapturous moments have to encounter the evils of years unborn?——Yet will I never repine——I, who am a woman, will yet be philosopher enough, not to lament the price of my pleasure!—No, my Barnwell," throwing her arms round his neck—"no!—though existence was that price!——What, then, can you repine at?"

"At the mystery which encircles her I love!" said Barnwell;—at the necessity of secrecy, which I abhor! Milwood, I feel about my heart the weight of a crime! ——Never shall I feel one happy moment till I can introduce you to my friends—solicit their forgiveness—and regain their esteem. Let me, then, hasten the return of happiness to us both, by the only means that are left us."

"I understand you, Barnwell—I perfectly understand you; and would to God that obstacles, insurmountable obstacles, did not prevent our adoption of those means. But, once for all—know, that the step, to which you alluded, is—quite impossible."

"Impossible!——Milwood, do I hear you rightly—Impossible?"

Milwood wept, and sighed.

"Tell me, most mysterious woman, and, by one word, forever seal my doom——Are you already married?"

Milwood remained silent.

"Nay, answer me, I beseech you," continued Barnwell. "The certainty that it is so cannot be more tormenting than this suspense. Tell me, then, at once, how guilty, and how miserable a wretch I am."

"Oh, Barnwell!—thy cruel penetration has wounded my soul!——I am——nay, start not, fly not from me——I am——already——married!——"

Barnwell, in an agony, burst from her arms, and rushed towards the door. He had seized the handle of the lock, when, with a shriek, Milwood fainted on the sofa. His tenderness returned in an instant, as he saw her beauteous person extended lifeless on the sofa. He rang the bell violently; Mrs. Griffiths and her servant came up, and he assisted them in their services. Half opening her eyes, the artful Milwood observed his attentions——

"He has left me—he is gone—he is gone forever!" exclaimed she. Then appearing to recover, and starting at the sight of him, she caught his hand, and kiss-

ing it rapturously—"Oh, this is godlike, indeed!" said she.

Barnwell, finding she recovered, dismissed the landlady and her servant, and tenderly supported her in his own arms. He could not, however, so far disguise his feelings, as to appear otherwise than offended.

"Ah! why was this cruelty exerted!" said she—"why have you saved me from death, if thus you gaze on me!—Never! never can I bear those reproving eyes!—Never can I support your anger, Barnwell. This scornful silence too! The bitter reproaches were kinder than this cold silence, Barnwell!"

"What can I say to thee, thou dangerous woman? ——You, Milwood, may deem adultery no crime; but I——"

"*You*, Barnwell, are no adulterer—you are innocent ——I, indeed, am guilty!——But the love I cherish for you is all my heart approves.——Compelled to marry another, I have vowed at the altar to be his; but never have those vows been sanctioned by my heart—they were tortured from my lips—but never has my person yielded to such legalized pollution. From that memorable day I became a fugitive, and only approached the altar with that view. A prisoner, in the strictest sense, I had no other alternative, than to yield my hand to a loathed bridegroom, whom, from that hour to this, I never have beheld."—Barnwell sat silently musing on the sofa; his hands were folded in each other, and his eyes fixed on the floor.

"Still you are silent, Barnwell. I see the rising scorn that sits upon your lips; I know the innate delicacy of your pure mind revolts at the desperate actions of a phrensy-stricken woman, whom cruel tyranny and unbounded love unite to plunge into despair. I will not aim to lessen your disgust; it is the only remedy for my ill-fated passion. Go, then, too lovely youth; go, and forget forever the lost—lost Milwood!—Go, and in some other's arms, be blessed; while I, in a lone corner of the earth, mourn o'er thy memory, and bless thy name."

"Yes, madam," cried Barnwell, starting from his reverie——"I perceive no other mode of action:—there appears one only outlet from this sea of guilty pleasures;—where, longer to remain, must be destruction!"

"I know your dreadful meaning, sir;—'Tis cruel, but 'tis necessary. We must part; and, since I have become so loathsome to your sight, the rudest deserts will be preferable to your presence. No—I could never stay to be despised by you!"——

Here the siren shed a flood of artificial tears, that tortured Barnwell to the very soul. The extreme sensibility of his nature subjected him to extremes in sentiment; now, most tenderly he pitied the miseries of Milwood; then, the memory of his family rushed across his mind—he saw their indignant frowns, he heard their rebukes, for a conduct so unworthy of them, and of himself. Again, when he reflected on the dreadful fate of her, who had abandoned so much for his sake, he was ready to extend his hand, and vow eternal truth. Again, the taunts of the world, the revenge of an injured husband, and the ignominy to himself and friends, of a public accusation, checked the softness quivering on his lips, which only escaped by a painful sigh——

"Painful to me, Milwood, are those tears; but, after the knowledge I have obtained of your situation, to continue a connexion——"

"I know it must not be," interrupted she:—"I know the jaundiced eye of prejudice views it in all the hideous colourings of vice! I ask it not, my Barnwell——heart-breaking is the sacrifice; but to your peace of mind I will surrender even yourself! Yet, do not add to the horrors of such a separation, by inflicting the misery of thinking that I am despised by you. Say that you do not hate me; and——"

"Hate you!—Oh Milwood—have I not preferred you even to virtue? And now, if you knew the struggle of my heart, you would see it is impossible to hate you!"

"Generous——generous Barnwell!—why should the cold and rigid arbitration of an ill-judging world sever such hearts as ours!"

As she spoke, she twined her arms around his neck; her palpitating heart beat against his bosom, and her warm kisses brought on a delirium of ecstasy.

At this moment the door opened, and three men, in masks, rushed into the room. Milwood shrieked and fainted. Two of these intruders held Barnwell on the sofa, and prevented his cries; whilst the other conveyed Milwood away in his arms.

Barnwell in vain exerted himself against superior strength, as no person came to his assistance. In about ten minutes the third man returned, and beckoned the others to follow him. They left Barnwell gagged and bound. A considerable time elapsed before Mrs. Griffiths and her servant made their appear ance, crying and lamenting most bitterly, having un dergone the same treatment as Barnwell.

When they had released him, he raved with the fury of a maniac; impeached the integrity of the poor wo man, who stood trembling at his anger; and gave the reins to the passions of jealousy and despair.

The strength of his unhappy attachment was at no period so visible as now. The uncertainty of her fate, the tormenting apprehensions he felt for her safety, engrossed his whole soul.

The house being situated at a distance from any other, he could obtain no intelligence by inquiries.

Having, after a considerable time, somewhat exhausted the first and most violent bursts of passion, he began to listen to the reasonings of Mrs. Griffiths; and the only probable conclusion that he could draw was, that the old gentleman, who had been there in the morning, and was so desirous of seeing Milwood, and who, he had supposed, was Mental, must have been her uncle, who had taken this method of carrying her off to her husband.

As his present state of mind prevented his returning immediately to Mr. Emery's, he remained some hours

at Brompton, contemplating what steps to pursue. The suggestion that best pleased him, of the many that presented themselves, was, to seek out Mental, relate to him all that had happened, and be guided by his opinion.

Just as he was preparing to put this resolution in practice, a boy delivered a letter at the door, addressed to Barnwell, and which he said had been given him by a man, who directed him to the house, and then ran away.

THE LETTER.

"It will be a very useless waste of your time to pursue the unfortunate woman who has been snatched from your arms; she is in the custody of her uncle at present, and in a few days will quit this kingdom forever. The steps which an injured husband will adopt towards the spoiler of his honour, and the destroyer of his peace, you will shortly learn from those, whose profession it is to seek from the justice of the laws the only reparation in your power."

There was neither name nor address affixed to this letter; but its contents stung Barnwell to the soul. It confirmed his opinion as to her fate, and his own. He now hesitated, whether he *ought* to apply to Mental, under his present circumstances; and yet to whom else *could* he apply. He shuddered at the very idea of acquainting his mother or his uncle—The thought was like lightning through his brain—

"Never, never," exclaimed he, as he paced the room with the letter in his hand—"never could my hand be firm enough to write them such intelligence. What! tell my benevolent benefactor, that, in return for his generosity to me, I have branded his name and family with the crime of adultery!—tell my affectionate sister, my honoured and widowed mother, that, instead of the consolations I owe her, she must expect

to read the crimes of her son exhibited in the public prints, and listen to sneering tattlers, while they point to her venerable form, and cry, '*that's* the *Adulterer's* mother!'—O God, can any man do this?—No, no—let me hide my guilty head in some dark cavern, far from the haunts of men, ere such tidings reach their ears! Oh, that the oblivion of death was shed over me ere that day come!"

When the powers of his mind had been stretched to the extent of pain, by reflecting on his mother and Eliza, and some little relaxation of grief ensued, another source of misery sprung from the image of Milwood. He felt all her sufferings; he listened, in imagination, to her groans; and his heart sickened at the thought that he should never see her more. Thus tortured by remorse and jealousy, the unhappy Barnwell, with trembling steps, once more gained his master's house; and, without resolving on any measure to adopt, he passed a sleepless night, in anxious dread of what to-morrow would produce.

CHAPTER IX.

The first intelligence that Barnwell received, when he arose, was the arrival of the family from the Pavilion the preceding day, which he gathered from the servants, who were packing and cording trunks for a journey. Mr. Emery himself had risen early, and encountered Barnwell in the Hall. There were no traces of uneasiness now to be observed in his countenance, and Barnwell was not a little surprised at so sudden a return of his former gayety.

"We're going to Ramsgate," said Mr. Emery, "and Mrs. Emery insists upon your accompanying us. Indeed, I wish it myself."

Barnwell was thunderstruck—"Ramsgate, sir!—I really am not prepared. If I might be excused—"

"Oh, by no means; any thing you may have occasion for can be sent after you. The plan is arranged; you are to drive Miss Freeman in the curricle; and there will be three or four other carriages. We breakfast early. The carriages are ordered at eleven. You'll be ready."

Before Barnwell could reply, Mr. Emery was gone. "Ramsgate!" said he to himself. "Curricle!—Miss Freeman! This is sudden indeed! Just at this crisis to be obliged to leave the metropolis!—What can be done?—Even should I acquaint Mental, what could he do towards concealing a transaction, that *must* come before a public court of justice?—His advice, at least, may aid me!"

It was yet but eight o'clock; he determined, therefore, to wait upon Mental immediately. When he arrived at his lodgings, to his infinite concern, he learnt that he had discharged them the day before, at a moment's notice; but had left the following note, which was to have been delivered to him that morning.

"Accident has just discovered to me the wretched woman, who aided the cursed designs of the betrayer of my daughter's honour. She resides at Ramsgate—I am flying thither in the hope, that she will direct me to the villain, who, if he lives, shall feel the vengeance of an injured father; and the death of my Elinor shall yet be avenged. Farewell. MENTAL."

The hope of meeting Mental at Ramsgate, tended to make the journey thither no longer a matter of regret; and as he flattered himself, that his prosecutors would at least acquaint him with their proceedings, he left particular directions to have all letters immediately forwarded to him; and, assuming as serene a countenance as possible, he joined the party in the breakfast room, which consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Emery,

the Miss Emerys, Miss Freeman, Lord Morley, Mr. Eastwood and Captain Middleton.

Preparations concluded, the party started for Ramsgate. Mrs. Emery and her daughters were delighted with the situation of the place. Lord Morley and the *polite divine* also killed their time tolerably to their satisfaction, with the aid of bathing rooms, libraries, theatres, raffles, dancing, sailing, riding, driving, eating, drinking, and sleeping.

Captain Middleton and Mr. Emery had other occupations; they were gamesters in the confidence of each other; the former had been many years of the profession, the other was of later practice.—Mr. Freeman, his godfather and master, had married him to his ward, an heiress, and had given him a share of his concerns,

Mr. Emery entered life with the fairest prospects, and the best intentions; but unfortunately connecting himself with courtiers, and by their interests with the government itself, his vanity defeated his interest, and he had injured most deeply, not only his own fortune, but that of his early benefactor. By the artificial aid which his court friends afforded him, he was enabled to extend a credit, which imperceptibly, but inevitably, undermined his fortunes; since, in return for that credit, a reciprocal accommodation was expected, which could only be yielded by narrowing their capital, whilst additional credit called for its enlargement.

It is matter of peculiar regret, that the only methods which persons in Mr. Emery's situation can adopt, to retrieve their errors, are precisely those which are equally likely to render them fatal. Thus, had Mr. Emery possessed the resolution to have narrowed his concerns, confined his trade, and lessened his expenses, his consequence in the eyes of the world would have sunk, his *court friends* would have vanished, and those whom *he* could no longer serve would at once have withheld their countenance from *him;* and the consequence is obvious.

In addition to this consideration, Mr. Emery was

naturally vain, and shrunk from the idea of a temporary degradation. Hope pointed from one speculation to another, till, in the pursuit of reparation, he found destruction; yet, though in sight, he struggled to conceal it from himself: he trembled with horror at the recollection of the wide ruin he had wrought, and, by various methods, strove to murder his own thoughts.

Middleton was a man, whose very heart was bad, and within whose breast the voice of Conscience had long been stifled. The necessities of Emery made him the dupe of this wretch, who, by pretending to initiate him in the mean arts of gaming, only secured him the more easily his prey.

The amiable Maria carried with her to Ramsgate a silent sorrow, and concealed affection, which preyed upon her health and spirits, and cast a gloom over those scenes that enchanted others.

Barnwell, the unhappy Barnwell, was the prey of the most afflicting remorse and tormenting uncertainty.

Such were the party, who, by the splendour of their establishment, attracted the admiration of the rich, and the envy of the poor; *that poor*, who would often exchange their envy for pity, if, through the dazzling exterior of grandeur, they could view such hearts as Emery's.

The mind of Barnwell was suffering the severest pains of which its nature was susceptible. But the utmost powers of language are inadequate to describe the conflict of contending influences in the bosom of the amiable Maria. Pity was a nursling which she had fostered there from the first moment she was capable of receiving impressions. Benevolence was the instinct of Maria — and to dispense around her comfort and peace was the business of her hands, and the object of her thoughts.—When the merits of Barnwell had kindled in her heart a new and strong emotion, she had cherished it without the remotest apprehension of danger. When she discovered that virtuous sympathies, and congenial tastes, imperceptibly

had wrought a passion in her breast, she started not with shame—she examined the object of her admiration in every point of view, and found him worthy; while the similarity of their dispositions and pursuits drew from Barnwell an attention, which Hope had painted to her mind in the colours most agreeable to her wishes. It was not, therefore, till the quick echo of scandal had vibrated to her ear, stories to the prejudice of his moral character, that the breast of Maria ever felt a pang. But when his subsequent behaviour sanctioned the surmises formed upon report; when she beheld his former openness of countenance changed into a contracted brow, and a timid eye; when she saw his former polite attentions converted into the most ill-timed absences of mind—his occasional starts—his abrupt sighs—and various other symptoms, that too plainly say—"My heart is not at ease!"—then was Maria miserable indeed! She felt his sorrows, and would have healed them by the sacrifice of all that was dearest to her in existence.

As she pursued this train of thought, however, and traced the supposed cause of his inquietudes to Milwood, pity for his sufferings became diminished by a jealous apprehension, which she found it impossible to conquer. In vain she reproved the selfishness of her feelings: she found that the heart will act as a free agent; and often, very often, against the cool, dissuading admonitions of the judgment.

That heart still cherished for Barnwell the glow of love; and, in spite of her efforts to dissemble, the effects of that love were conspicuous in many of her actions.

The whole of the party, except Barnwell, being engaged on a sailing trip to visit the fleet then anchored in the Roads, he had spent great part of the day in writing letters for Mr. Emery; when, towards evening, a person inquired for him, who would impart his errand to himself only. He had the appearance of a fisherman, and, upon being introduced to Barnwell, delivered the following letter——

"If it be possible, let me entreat you will accompany the bearer immediately, who will conduct you in five minutes to Yours only and forever,

"MILWOOD."

Without a moment's deliberation Barnwell followed his guide. At a small detached hut, near the sea side, the fisherman halted. A clean, neat elderly woman sat at the door, mending nets, and four or five children were playing before her——

"This is my bit of a place, please your honour; and there is a grand lady within, who gave me that letter for your honour."

Barnwell entered, and discovered Milwood, elegantly attired in a travelling dress. The fisherman retired to the outside of the hut, and they were left alone.

"How came you hither?" cried Barnwell. "Where is your uncle?"——

There was a wild horror in her looks—she fixed her eyes on him, grasped him by the hand, and made no reply to his questions. She conducted him in this manner, through the fisherman's garden, to an avenue that led directly to the cliffs.—Barnwell began to tremble for her intellects, so well she feigned the character of confirmed despair. When they had ascended a stupendous height, she approached the extremity of the cliff that overhung an inlet of the sea, whose billows tumbled at its base with an awful roaring.

"Here, Barnwell, we must pause," said she, in a tone of voice expressive of the firmest resolution—"we are alone—unheard—unseen by mortal!"—then fixing her eyes on the setting sun—"Witness for me, thou glorious orb, descending now beneath the expanse of waters—If these eyes for the *last time* are fixed on thee, Oh, bear me witness in the chancery of heaven—here stands my murderer!"

Barnwell started!—

"The agitation of the mind," continued she, "consequent on an adventure like that which severed us so rudely from each other, is now over, sir. There exist

no more within this bosom doubts and desires, contending for empire:—the conflict is decided. I am free from the control both of my uncle and the being who imagined that the mummery of a ceremony could consign my heart to his possession. They have both sworn never to see me more."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Barnwell.

"Yes," replied she; "but you, sir, they mean to pursue with all the vengeance with which the law invests them, unless you compromise it by the payment of a certain amount of pounds sterling. Even at this moment there is a lawyer at Ramsgate, instructed to propose terms with you, and in the event of your refusing to comply, he has instructions to make the matter public, and bring an action against you in the Court of King's Bench for heavy damages. The name of this lawyer is Blackmore, and, learning that he had orders to seek an interview with you at Ramsgate, I at once hurried here myself to see you and apprize you of all that had passed; at the same time to advise you into compliance with their terms to save your character and mine from the public odium that must be the lot of each, if this—*adultery*, the world calls it —is suffered to be made public."

Barnwell was amazed!

"It would be absurd, through a false delicacy, to speak less to the purpose, sir.—We are not now mingled with the subjects of prejudice and forms, in what is termed society. You and I are upon this spot *ourselves alone;* and the expression of our feelings to each other needs suffer no restraint. All that we view around us, at present, is the work of nature, save these artificial habiliments that deck our persons.—Be ours, then, the language of nature. For myself, I am determined to speak no other. Thus, then, says my heart—— that it will exist upon no other terms, than the possession of your love. Say, then, Barnwell—Do you bid me still enjoy the cheerful rays of life—or shall I quickly seek the shades of everlasting night?"

"How wildly you converse!" said Barnwell:—"surely your reason, Milwood——"

"Has thrown off the fetters that controlled it," interrupted she. "The true end of reason is to lead us to happiness. Two paths are opened to me, and one of them is—Death!—Surely that trembling is feigned, sir—or you would not hesitate to prevent a catastrophe which so seriously affected you."

"How prevent it, Milwood?"

"By acceding to the proposition offered you."

"It is impossible!"

"Nothing more easy;—your bond for the greater part would be accepted; and, surely three or four hundred might be raised immediately. *I* have some baubles, which I should deem well disposed of in procuring your peace of mind. But, Barnwell, there is a deliberate coolness, too evident to be overlooked, that tells me, 'tis your wish, that the affair should burst upon the public ear. I must have been mistaken in you, sir, when I thought otherwise. But, mark me, while I swear, in the hallowed presence of Omniscience!" (and she knelt) "not beyond the limits of another day will Milwood live, if you persist in a refusal of the terms!"

"Hold, hold—for Heaven's sake, retract!" cried Barnwell.

"'Twas not rashly sworn, and shall be sacredly observed," said she, rising with a firm majestic air.

The soul of Barnwell was tortured with severest conflicts. He could not gaze upon her form without a love that equalled adoration. His own heart, void of guile, suspected not deceit in her. He conceived he saw before him misery and despair of his own creation; and his countenance proclaimed to Milwood, that the moment proper for the attack was come.

Somewhat softening her voice and her manner, she pressed his hand—"Could I have ever thought *you* would have doomed me to destruction, Barnwell!—*me*, did I say: Is it not possible, that *with me* may

perish one, whose future smiles *might* have blessed us, Barnwell!"

"O hold!——My wife—my guide—my fate—lead, direct, control me, as thou wilt!—Live, Milwood; live on any terms you please."

With matchless art she guarded against this overflow of his affection; and cautiously reflecting upon her situation—"Nay, Barnwell," cried she, "add not this cruel pity to my sufferings! If it is resolved, that I must die, in mercy do not shake my resolution, by the thought that you would feel a pang, when I am dead!"

"Talk not of death," said Barnwell. "Do I not say, that I will sign the bond?—Ay," continued he, wildly, "though sure destruction were the penalty. Come, then, let us seek this Blackmore."

"Oh, Barnwell, how has this tenderness altered all my thoughts. No; you shall not sign this bond; at least, not at present. Here are some jewels of my mother's; take them; they have been valued at six hundred pounds. You can despatch some confidential person to London, who may dispose of them. But, in the mean time, it is absolutely necessary, so well I know the wretch's mercenary spirit, to procure three hundred pounds this night. If you could borrow so much till the jewels are disposed of——"

"Oh, with ease," cried the poor victim. "I have always more than that of Mr. Emery's in my possession, and I am sure he will oblige me."

"And yet," said Milwood, "would it not lead to a variety of questions and conjectures, if you were to ask him? As it will be but, at farthest, for a few days, could you not, without his knowledge——"

Barnwell started—"What! *steal* it, do you mean?"

"If you *must* put so harsh a construction on my meaning, why, call it *stealing*. I conceive, merely to borrow from an idle fund, for so a short time, and with such security for the repayment, differs essentially from *stealing*;—but use your own discretion. I merely hinted the objection, from the motive of desiring to

save you pain; since you must either confess our connexion too abruptly, (which would be conveyed to your Eliza and your mother,) or evade it by a falsehood—a meaner vice, in my estimation, than even *stealing!*"

This sophistry was a stumbling block to Barnwell. He sighed—he inwardly lamented the alternative to which he was reduced, but was silent. They now walked towards the fisherman's hut.—Milwood deposited the jewels in his hands, which Barnwell said he would not sell, but pledge for the sum immediately required, and would soon redeem them. He engaged to return to the hut in half an hour, and departed.

He entered the residence of Mr. Emery—he opened his bureau—his hands trembled—he counted out three hundred pounds in bank notes. In writing his name on one of them, a tear fell and blotted it;—it surprised him:—"Why do I weep?" said he—"Childish weakness!"

As he returned through the town he kept his eyes fixed on the ground; he imagined every passenger looked suspiciously upon him. When he entered the room, Milwood received him with open arms. He breathed hard—his countenance was pale, and his knees tottered.

"You are unwell, my Barnwell," said she.

"A little sick— it will be over soon."

"If this is the consequence of your effort to preserve me, Barnwell, rather let me perish than exist upon your misery—Go—replace these notes—and be happy!"

"Milwood—it is not easy to vanquish those outposts of virtue, which have long repelled within my bosom the approach of a *mean* thought. A reverence of honour is the strong guard of virtue. I have broken down the trenches of self-approbation, by the commission of a mean, if not a vicious act!—But it is done—and—I shall—I hope—soon forget it!"

"Indeed—indeed, my Barnwell, you think too seriously. Had you even committed a robbery, you

could not have discovered more remorse. Surely, there is something like weakness in yielding to these vapourish impressions."

"It *may* be weakness—but——"

"Come—come, no more of this—I have another subject now for your attention. Do you observe a little cottage at the foot of yon ascent that winds up the cliffs? I have engaged a small but neat apartment there, for a few days. Shall I have your approbation? —Come, 'tis but a few minutes' walk."

There was a magic surrounded this woman, which Barnwell had long found omnipotent. He was surprised upon entering the cottage, to find it most elegantly, though simply, furnished. The evening was warm—Milwood conducted him to an alcove in the garden, that commanded a near view of the sea. A gentle breeze floated melodiously on the surface of the ocean; the moon's image was reflected in the deep, and her silver beams shed an undazzling splendour on the surrounding scenery. The soothing silence of the hour was uninterrupted; save, now and then, the nightingale sent forth her soft and sweetest notes; or the dashing of distant oars murmured melancholy on their ears.

A repast of fruit and home-made wine furnished the table; whilst Milwood, by every artifice in her power, essayed to soothe his melancholy, and turn the current of his reflections.

The sensibility of Barnwell's soul was exquisite, and in some fatal moments gave passion a superiority over principle. 'Twas thus that, in the enchanting caresses of this beautiful woman, he forgot all other existence. Rapture succeeded to bliss, and his whole soul yielded to the ecstasies of love!

An hour or two had passed away in these endearments, which Milwood artfully mingled with short accounts of her release from her uncle and husband, and her vows of future fidelity to him. Still she hinted the *necessity* of a *little* longer concealment of their connexion from his friends; well aware that the

whole force of her enchantment rested on that point —one breath of suspicion would have ruined all her deep-laid schemes, and one effort of his friends would have released her victim from the sacrifice, to which her most infamous arts had doomed him.

There cannot be a more dangerous situation for youth, than that which, *from any motive* induces them to withdraw a confidence in those, who, by experience, interest, and affection, are *always best*, and *often solely*, qualified to advise them.

It was nearly midnight, and of course too late to return to Mr. Emery's; but this occasioned him no uneasiness, as from the irregular mode of living at watering places, the individuals of the family seldom saw each other, except at dinner.

As they were about to retire, a little sail which had hovered in sight for some time, made the shore immediately under the alcove. Two persons landed, one of whom, muffled up in a black cloak, said to his companion, in a voice which Barnwell instantly recognised as Mental's——"We must, if possible, obtain a lodging at the hotel to-night; or, if not, a ramble among the cliffs and rocks will occupy the time till morning."

"Ay, master," said the other; "but I'd rather be comfortably tumbling about on a soft feather-bed, than be climbing hard rocks by moon-light."

"*You* might," said Mental; "but think you now, that the villian who seduced, and then abandoned, my poor child, and who with justice may be deemed her murderer, *sleeps undisturbed* upon his bed of down? Alas! there is a difference in the moulding of the human heart, if it be so. *I*, who am innocent by comparison, sleep not without such dreams of horror, as chill the blood to think upon."

They then wandered out of hearing.

"Poor Mental!" said Barnwell.

"Mental!" exclaimed Milwood, trembling.—"Do you know that person then—and is his name Mental?"

"Yes," replied Barnwell. "'Tis an uncommon name. Do you know any of the same?"

"I *did once!*" said she, with a sigh, more sorrowful than even *she* could have *feigned.* It came from the heart. Masking her feelings, however, she continued —"but this person cannot possibly be the Mental I knew!—Come, my love, the morning air grows cool—let us retire."

CHAPTER X.

The certainty of Mr. Mental being at Ramsgate was some slender relief to the agitated mind of poor Barnwell. The next morning he busied himself in inquiries, and at length discovered his residence. The whole of that day, however, Mental was from home, and Barnwell merely left his address.

The house and family of Mr. Emery grew hateful to his sight; his own reflections were intolerable; and the only resource left him was the society of Milwood. This consummate mistress of hypocrisy now amused him with a new tale of the manner in which she had disposed of the three hundred pounds. Blackmore the lawyer was introduced by her to Barnwell, and he produced a fictitious release from the pretended husband of Milwood, and a bond of five hundred pounds, payable to himself, with interest, at the expiration of three months. The artifices of this man, added to the arts of Milwood, overpowered the scruples and hesitations of a young man half distracted with the perplexity of his situation, and he signed the bond.

He now considered Milwood as his wife, and was only restrained by her entreaties, for *yet a little more delay*, from acquainting his parent and his sister with his situation. He was determined to confide immedi-

ately to Mental, and went early the next morning to his lodgings.

Soon as that extraordinary man observed Barnwell, he ran to him, and shaking him by the hand—"I have discovered him!" said he:—"the monster shall not escape the vengeance due to his enormous crimes. I will be revenged—a daughter's shame—a daughter's death, must be avenged—Middleton, or Mental, dies."

"Middleton!" exclaimed Barnwell.

"Ay!" cried Mental, "Middleton—Captain Middleton—the friend, the intimate, the familiar, of your Emery—He it was who destroyed the innocence a father had abandoned!"

"Astonishing!" exclaimed Barnwell. "Have you ever seen the captain?"

"Never," said Mental; "but I have learnt his character—which is a blot upon the name of man! where is this Emery's house? I'll see this Middleton to-day."

"I will conduct you, if you please," said Barnwell. "But, before we go, if you would bestow an hour's attention upon a circumstance that involves in its consequences my future destiny"—

"Milwood you allude to?"

"Yes," and Barnwell related every occurrence that had taken place since his unfortunate connexion.

"Beware, youth, beware!" said Mental, when Barnwell had concluded his story, having concealed nothing from Mental but the means by which he had obtained the three hundred pounds. "I shall think on your story. In the meantime lead me to this Middleton."

Between Captain Middleton and Mental an interview of more than an hour's duration took place.

"D—n me, sir," cried Middleton, "I will brook this detail of seduction no longer. Lead me to this injured father, of whom you represent yourself the messenger. Let me see him, and I'll confront him to his face!"

"You *will*—then *do!*" exclaimed Mental. "Behold him, thou reptile! behold him here!"

The astonished captain trembled, and his eyes shrunk from the severe gaze of Mental.

"The steps that have led to this discovery, I shall not retrace," said Mental. "You know—and I *know* you are the seducer of my child, the oppressor of innocence, and I demand the paltry satisfaction of your life."

"Sir," said Middleton, after a long struggle of cowardice—"I see you are determined not to listen to anything I offer in my defence; and, therefore, name your place and time, and take what satisfaction you please."

"To-morrow, at break of day, which will be four o'clock—behind the mill, two fields from the adjoining lane," said Mental, in a firm tone.

"I'll meet you there," said Middleton, who, on this occasion, was indeed a coward; though, till this moment, he had always retained the credit of great courage. But there was an inexpressible something in the countenance of the father, which the seducer of the daughter trembled to gaze upon, in spite of his insensibility to all virtuous emotions.

Mr. Emery and Barnwell were called into the room; Emery endeavoured to prevent a hostile meeting, but in vain. It was at length agreed that Emery and George should be on the duel ground, and Mental retired.

No sooner had the latter left the house, than Mrs. Emery and her daughters, attended by their *shadows*, Lord Morley and Eastwood, rushed into the library to learn the errand of so strange a *Quiz*, as he was termed by Morley. It was in vain to attempt concealment, and partly by Emery, partly by Middleton, and partly by Barnwell, the whole history was related of Barnwell's first acquaintance with him—of the loss of his wife—the fate of his daughter—and the result of that morning's visit.

"A duel!" screamed Mrs. Emery. "Captain Middleton, it shall not take place. Run, my lord—run, Mr. Eastwood, to a justice and entreat him, for Heaven's sake, to get all the constables in the place ready to keep the peace."

"I insist upon it," said Middleton, "that you do not obey such orders, my lord—as you will answer to my honor. I must confess that I, as well as many others, have been guilty of improprieties, of which I readily acknowledge this one of the worst. As to the death of the girl, of which this old man has spoken, God knows I was perfectly ignorant, and of her destitution, too, for I have not seen her for many years. In fact I had almost forgotten her. The encountering the old man in this way is awkward, certainly very awkward; but it is unavoidable."

"Oh, you cruel wretch, you!" cried Mrs. Emery—"when you know the value of your life to Mr. Emery to myself, to thousands—thus to sport with it! A figure like yours, Captain Middleton, to be shot at by such an old, ugly, wizard-looking being as that—It shall not be—I will go myself, this moment, to—"

"La, Ma'!" said Miss Emery—"Do you think Captain Middleton can't level a pistol better than old Mental? I have not the least fear but he'll kill the old brute."

"And, then, will he not be obliged to fly the kingdom?"

"O, only for a little time, till it's blown over?"

"Only look at Mr. Barnwell!" cried Charlotte, who had been watching his countenance some time: "really, now, by the excessive length of his visage, one would imagine *he* were going to fight a duel."

In fact, Barnwell's mind was absorbed in very different meditations. He was anxiously calculating the time that had elapsed since he had despatched the jewels to London, and reflecting on the horrible consequences, should the man prove dishonest. Aroused, by this remark of Charlotte, from his reverie, he unfortunately betrayed his absence by a sham laugh, and exclaiming—"A duel! What duel?"

"There's a hard-hearted wretch, now!" said Charlotte, "to laugh at such a serious thing as a duel! Besides, you've broken the heart, or something of that kind, of Miss Freeman. She is now sick abed, mur-

muring your name, and if she dies, you'll be indicted for her murder."

"Oh, it's so disagreeable to have people ill in the house," said Emma. "It makes one vaporish to see the old doctor, and the apothecaries, and the nurses!—"

"Oh! absolutely," cried her mamma, "it is the most excessively dull thing in the world!—Maybe she'll die, too!—Really, Emma, I'll return to the Pavilion; I do hate anything that reminds one of one's latter end!"

"A death! and a duel! Really it's awful," exclaimed Charlotte.

"The duel must not be—it must be prevented—Captain Middleton, I insist—"

"Whatever the event of to-morrow may be," said Middleton, "this trifling on the subject is unbecoming. I have made up my mind, madam; [to Mrs. Emery.] I am bound in honour to give the meeting; and whoever attempts to prevent it, will throw a stain upon my character, that nothing but suicide will efface."

Mrs. Emery shrieked and fainted; her daughters flew to her assistance, and the party separated. Mr. Emery gave directions to Barnwell to discharge some debts of Captain Middleton's, and retiring with the captain, to arrange some mutual concerns, he desired Barnwell to let him have his accounts to examine in the evening.

Upon the arrival of the post, Barnwell was surprised to receive a letter, in a strange hand-writing; but his surprise was soon lost in stupefaction when he read the contents, as follow—

"Sir—You have been most grossly abused by the person, whoever it may be, that consigned the jewels to you. Their value is nothing more than the gold and silver in which they are set, about seven or eight pounds—The stones are all sham—Having business that will keep me here a day or two longer, I thought it my duty to apprize you of this affair.

"I am, sir, yours, "Tim. Brown."

Some minutes had elapsed before Barnwell removed his eyes from the paper; and when he did, they were covered by a thick film, that obscured every object around him. Cold sweats succeeded; and he had nearly, very nearly fainted.

"O, Milwood!" exclaimed he—"Milwood, thou hast destroyed me!"

He rushed out of the house, and immediately ran to the little cottage. Breathless and pale, he approached the syren, with the letter open in his hand, and gave it her to peruse. With the most complete hypocrisy imaginable, she shrieked—she raved—and imprecated curses on the man, though the sham jewels had been made to her own orders. She protested most solemnly, and impiously, called on heaven to witness her oaths, that they were her mother's jewels; and either the man, she said, must have exchanged them, or some secret thief in her former residences—

"Can my Barnwell," said she, "for a moment harbour a thought so much beneath his liberal nature to indulge, as to suppose me privy to a fraud? What is there, Barnwell, in my nature like such mean dishonesty? Reflect, and answer, sir, whether a person of my spirit, even were she vicious, would stoop to the paltry, pilfering tricks of a Ring-dropper? Barnwell, it would have hurt me less had you accused me of a murder!"

"Nay, Milwood," said the youth, "I have not accused you; but I am distracted by that event! What can be done? Mr. Emery has ordered me this evening, this very evening, to make up my accounts.—I am lost forever! Never more can I return to him—And whither, oh, whither can I go!"

In the utmost agony, he threw himself into a chair, and leaned his head upon the table. Milwood, affecting the profoundest thought, walked about the room.—"The deficiency must not be known," cried she. "We must prevent this discovery by any means."

"I see no possible way," said Barnwell.

"I see but one," said she; "and that you will scruple

to adopt. 'Tis, indeed, one that, upon a *small* necessity, ought not to be resorted to; but when, if adopted, it will, to a certainty, prevent disgrace to yourself and family, the utter ruin of all your future prospects, the horrors of a prison, and the character of a thief—I think, self-preservation calls on us to adopt it."

"Name it," said Barnwell.

"FORGERY."

Starting from the chair, with all the wildness of despair expressed in his countenance—"Wretch! Sorceress!—Away—Away!—There is a dreadful ruin waits on thy accursed beauty, and I now see it in all its horrors!"

He would have left the room; but Milwood, seizing his arm, detained him.

"Barnwell, were I that demon your despair now exhibits to your mind, I should at once relinquish you. What more could such a spirit wish, than that, in this disordered state, you should seek your master. Detection and disgrace, chains and imprisonment, would follow; but no, Barnwell!—too closely woven is my own destiny with thine to suffer this: too deeply impressed upon my heart, Oh, youth, are thy endearments, thus to be relinquished. And, by the Power that sees that heart, I swear, no fate shall separate us. No, though thine obstinate resistance should doom thee to the unwholesome damps of a dark dungeon—should load these manly limbs with fetters—I would follow thee, and share in all thy wretchedness. I—innocently though it be—yet, I have been the cause of your calamities; and never, never will I yield my title to a share of the bitter draught."

With all the softest, tenderest expressions, she hung upon him; she embraced him, and bedewed his cheeks with her tears. The soul of Barnwell was in an agony—he sighed—he sobbed aloud—he called upon his mother, his Eliza, and invoked the departed spirit of his father to direct him!

"Oh, think upon the agonies of thy dear friends!" cried she. "Can you reflect a moment on the phrensy

that will seize your venerable mother—the pangs that will rend your sister's heart, when they hear a son, a brother——"

"Hold, hold," cried Barnwell. "They *must not, shall not!*——Tell me the means that can prevent discovery—Quick, quick, unfold them, that, without the possibility of a retraction, I may pledge my soul's eternal welfare to their adoption!"

"Suppose a bill of exchange was drawn upon Mr. Emery; say for five hundred pounds at two months; could you not imitate his acceptance?—If so, I would myself undertake to negotiate it; and long ere it became due we could provide means to prevent its being presented for payment; and thus the whole transaction would remain a secret within our own breasts—You hesitate!—"

"Oh, Milwood, what a proposal! Miserable wretch that I am; how am I fallen, that I can with patience listen to it!"

"Is this a time for abstract reasoning? Is this a moment to moralize, Barnwell? If you are not determined to surrender every hope—if you are determined to expose yourself, and all that are dear to you, to infamy—you must act—"

"I do not hesitate at the crime—for I am sunk beneath those scruples; but I tremble at the dreadful consequences of its discovery."

"Absurd argument!" said Milwood. "A *present*, an almost *instant* discovery must take place, if we do not resort to this, or some similar preventive. Against the chance of *future* detection there are ten thousand odds. Time, at least, will be gained; in which we may guard ourselves against the worst consequences. Ruin is at the door; and you are weakly arguing if it be wise to fly from it, because there is a possibility we may again encounter it."

"But," said Barnwell, "even if I were to adopt this dreadful alternative, how are you sure that you could procure money for this bill?"

"I will engage for three hundred of the five in less than six hours' time."

"But—but—I—cannot—it is impossible!"

"Barnwell, this weakness is unworthy of your nature.—Determine—are you prepared to tell Mr. Emery, that you have robbed him of three hundred pounds?—Are you prepared to meet the anger of your benefactor, the curses of a parent, the madness of your sister?——"

"Hold—hold—for Heaven's sake—or you will drive me to commit that, in desperation, which, on reflection to have done, will plunge me to the grave of a suicide!"

"And rather, Barnwell, much rather, would I see you dead at my feet by your own hands, than behold you among felons at the bar of justice, a spectacle to a gaping multitude!"

"O God! that must not be!—He would not, he could not, surely, proceed to such extremity!"

"Will you, then, trust to the hazard of *his clemency* a matter of such import? Puerile folly! Barnwell, I will myself save you from the effects of your own cowardice."

She produced a stamp from her pocket-book, and drew a bill of exchange upon Mr. Emery, payable in two months, for five hundred pounds.

In vain Barnwell asked her a string of questions—How she came by the stamp—for what purpose she could have it—if she had ever indulged such a thought before—and many others.

"When you receive the money to replace what you have taken, I will answer all these jealous questions; till then, I am dumb. There," (having finished it,) "I have drawn it in the fictitious name of Emily D'Alembert, and dated it from Southampton. I shall pass it as the signature of an emigrant friend. Now, in a word, will you put Mr. Emery's acceptance to it, or not?"

"Oh, Milwood!—over what a dreadful precipice do we hover!"

"And yet, insensible to the danger, you loiter upon its very brink. Barnwell, if you have the courage of a man; nay, if you merely possess the policy of a coward, hesitate no longer. If you persist in these obstinate scruples—by every thing most sacred, I swear, these eyes shall never view the misery that awaits you! If you leave this room with a refusal, I will not quit it living! I have endured wretchedness enough already in this accursed world of wo, and will endure no more. This steel is my sovereign antidote against all future misery. I will henceforth live happy —or will cease to live!"

She drew the dagger from her bosom, and, in the act, threw back that part of her dress that concealed the most lovely neck and breasts that ever kindled anarchy of desires in the heart of man!——Fixing the dagger's point to her left breast—

"Barnwell, my fate is in your hands—Approach me not—You know me resolute—If you stir one pace from the table, that moment the dagger shall be sheathed here; nor will I remove its point till you accept the bill, or quit the room:—Now, choose."—

"Where are the boasted powers of Reason now! I know *you resolute*, indeed!—and am thus reduced to Murder—or Forgery! If there is a Power, who sees the struggles, the desperate conflicts of this hour, O, let me hope, that, in my account hereafter——Why do I reason?—All clue of right or wrong is lost—my brain is fire—my heart is ice—I have no more the agency of my own will!—Woman—or demon—whichsoever thou art—I am your slave, forever!—Lead me, then, onward in your own paths, be their termination heaven or hell!"

He forged Mr. Emery's acceptance!——Milwood sprung towards the table, hurried the bill into her bosom, and covered her devoted victim with caresses.

She then left.

After an absence of two hours, she returned to the cottage, where Barnwell waited, in a state of mind beyond the powers of language to describe. Guilt, ter-

ror, and remorse, haunted his breast, and created there a hell of torments!

She tendered him a bank-note of three hundred pounds. Hastily snatching it from her hands, he cast on her a look of mingled love and horror, and rushed out of the room.

With this three hundred pounds, the wretched youth was enabled to replace the amount he had abstracted.

CHAPTER XI.

At the appointed hour for the meeting, Mental and Barnwell were on the ground, where Captain Middleton and Emery also punctually arrived. The paces were measured, the pistols loaded, and the antagonists took the ground. The surprise which had made a coward of Middleton had worn away, and he now resumed that courage for which he was celebrated. They were to fire together at a signal from Mr. Emery. The word was given—Mental's ball grazed the shoulder of Captain Middleton who fired in the air.

"How is this?" exclaimed Mental—"why did you fire in the air?"

"Having received your fire, sir," said the captain, "I presume I may now, without the imputation of cowardice, solicit your attention for a few minutes to some observations I would offer. When you have heard me, it shall remain for your decision, whether this affair shall proceed. If it is your wish to fire again, I shall think myself justified in returning it, after the explanation I may offer, and the satisfaction I have already afforded by receiving your ball."

"I cannot refuse to hear you, sir; but our situation requires you should be brief."

"If I could prove, from the most certain evidences," said the captain, "that your daughter lives———"

"My daughter lives!" exclaimed Mental, starting. —"Psha, psha, psha!"—I saw her die—I saw the earth receive her poor remains into its bosom! Why, then, this paltry evasion?"

"I am patient," said the captain; "I bear with the effusion of your sorrow—but, believe me, sir—if the unfortunate girl, whom the madness of desire urged me to seduce, and whose name was Mental, residing at Mrs. Orme's—if, sir, this was your daughter—she still lives—I saw her last night."

"Saw her last night!" echoed Mental, clasping his hands together—"I hope not——No, no—it cannot be —I saw her die."

"You must have been deceived, sir, by some strong resemblance of person, or some striking coincidence of circumstances—for, by Heaven, I repeat, Miss Mental lives!"

"Wonderful, wonderful!" said Mental, in a voice barely audible, with his folded hands placed to his eyes.

"After the strong impression of her death, which you have received," said the captain, "nothing will, perhaps, convince you of her existence, unless you were to see her."

"See her! see her!" exclaimed Mental, fearfully looking around him—"Is she near me?—I would rather embrace the severest tortures Cruelty ever framed!—See her!—horrible!—horrible!"

As he ceased, the teeth chattered in his head, and his whole frame was convulsed.

"Your arm, my friend," continued he to Barnwell. "I am faint."

He reclined his head on Barnwell's shoulder. Mr. Emery then advanced, and proposed retiring to his house, that Captain Middleton might relate the discovery of the preceding evening, from which Mr. Mental might draw his own conclusions. He submitted; and by a slow walk they arrived there. Mental asked for a glass of water, and, after taking it, requested Captain Middleton to proceed.

"It is a very considerable time, sir," said the captain,

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"since Miss Mental and myself separated—I would, if possible, avoid shocking your mind; but I am compelled to say, that Elinor's infidelity was the cause."

"Facts, facts, sir, if you please, and spare your comments," said Mental.

"Since our separation, I understand she visited Rome, Florence, and several of the Italian States, in company with a young nobleman, whom, at length, she left, and sunk into that way of living."

"I understand, sir," interrupted Mental—"Pray, go on."

"From that period, till last night, I have remained ignorant of her entirely. In consequence of the intended meeting of this morning, I had occasion for my attorney. Fortunately, I learnt he was in Ramsgate, and he waited on me. The cause of our meeting, of course, was mentioned; when, to my astonishment, he declared, your daughter was at that moment alive, and in Ramsgate! He cannot be deceived, for he knew her as early as myself, and has corresponded with her ever since."

"In Ramsgate!" muttered Mental; "so near me, too!"

"Yes," replied the captain. "She resides in a small cottage near the sea, and assumes the name of Milwood."

Barnwell turned pale as the dead; his knees shook, and his head sunk upon his breast. Mental, almost as much affected, had yet more presence of mind; and said, with particular emphasis, "*We* must inquire into this, and endeavour to *conceal our emotions for the present.*"

Barnwell took the hint; and, continuing to hold down his head, made every exertion in his power to screen his astonishment from observation.

"Where is this attorney, sir?" said Mental.

"In this house," replied the captain. "Hoping to gain your attention, I requested he would be ready to corroborate, by his testimony, what I have asserted. I will step for him."

"Nay, sir," said Mental; "*I* will examine him in private. Lead me to him."

This manœuvre of Mental's to prevent the meeting of Blackmore and Barnwell, was truly acceptable to the latter, who would, most probably, have been betrayed, by the presence of Blackmore, into a premature confession of his connexion.

The time that Mental was out of the room was occupied by the observations of Mr. Emery and Middleton on this discovery; whilst Barnwell's mind was absorbed in contemplating the consequences it would produce.

At length Mental returned, and, addressing himself to Captain Middleton—

"I am convinced," said he, "from the narrative of this man, that she, over whose grave I have wept, was not my daughter. I doubt not but she lives. This discovery gives birth to many difficulties, which I must overcome; my life, therefore, is necessary; and I am thus obliged to relinquish, at least for the present, any further claim which the laws of honour may allow me." He then beckoned Barnwell, and they left the room together.

Mental and Barnwell passed the distance from Mr. Emery's house to the lodgings of the former in the profoundest silence. When they entered the room, the sight of the two packets affected Mental extremely.

"I did not expect to see these papers again," said he; "but who could have imagined the events of this hour! Who could have doubted such appearances? The miserable being whom I deposited in the grave, Barnwell, was the friend and companion of Elinor when she resided in Holborn; her name really Ellen. Thus, whilst I have imagined she had withdrawn from our world, the guilty wretch has been laying snares to entangle you. Oh, my poor brain!"

Overpowered by the strength of his feelings, he sunk into a chair, and reclined his head on the table. He wept.

"Tears!" exclaimed he. "Well—well!—a few strug-

gles more, and nature must yield. But you, oh, ill-fated youth, what must be your feelings! The dupe of such consummate artifice—how must your bosom burn with indignation against the—against my daughter!"

"Oh, sir!" exclaimed Barnwell, with a heart too full for further utterance.

"Fly to her," cried Mental; "upbraid her! heap on her the curses of a father!"

"Hold—hold!" said Barnwell. "It cannot be—it is impossible—that a countenance, which bespeaks the calm, serene felicity of angels, can disguise so depraved a heart! There must be more Milwoods than one. She, whom I know, cannot be your Elinor—and yet such mysterious secrecy—such contradictory narrations—such evidence, too!—Oh, God! if it should be so!"

"Poor youth!" cried Mental; "fain would I comfort you; but when the recollection of the source whence flows your misery darts through my brain—can I reflect upon a prostituted child—can I contemplate the ruin of innocence I ought to have preserved, and be calm?"

In agony the wretched father stamped his feet, and clasped his hands together, with a groan that pierced the heart of Barnwell.

Further conversation between them followed, and, before they separated, it was arranged between them that Mental should occupy a room in the cottage where Milwood resided. He wished to be near her, and to satisfy himself beyond a doubt as to depravity or prospect of reformation.

When they separated, George went immediately to the cottage. Surprised at so early a visit, the first thought that occurred to her was, that the forgery had been detected, though Blackmore, in whose hands she placed the note, had declared he would not negotiate it for nearly a month. She was agreeably disappointed when he acquainted her with the nature of his errand; describing Mental as an old gentleman from

whom he had considerable expectations, and who wished to reside some time at Ramsgate incog.

"He is rich, is he?" said she.

"Very rich," said Barnwell.

"And who are his heirs?"

"He has none; nor, at present, any friend but me."

"Then you, most probably, would inherit all his wealth, were he to die?"

"Distant—far distant, be the day of his death!" cried Barnwell, "though ten times his wealth should be mine at the period."

It was settled that a bed should be prepared for him that evening. Barnwell left the cottage, returning to it after dark with Mental, who had dressed himself in the habit of a Hanoverian, in which he had formerly travelled. It *was* his daughter that he beheld; and in *her* he saw her unfortunate mother! To screen his confusion, Barnwell attracted the attention of Milwood, by saying—"This is Mr. Townley, whom I mentioned this morning. Circumstances rendering a temporary concealment necessary, he has chosen this disguise to ensure it."

"As the friend of my Barnwell, you are welcome, Mr. Townley; acquaintance, I doubt not, will teach me to respect you on your own account."

"By your leave, I will at once retire to my bed," said Mental.

"'Tis an early hour to retire," said Milwood, "but of course you will suit your own pleasure."

Barnwell, having conducted his friend to the chamber, took his leave of Milwood for the night, promising to pay an early visit in the morning. The instant he was gone, she dismissed her maid for the evening, and, shutting herself up in her chamber, wrote a letter to a man, to whom she was once a mistress, and with whom she was still connected in many of her dark acts. This was the Chevalier Zelotti, an Italian, whose dark and wicked soul had sealed the crowning touch of depravity upon the heart of Milwood. She constantly corresponded with him, and solicited his advice

in many of her undertakings. In the letter she now wrote to him, she gave a detail of all that occurred recently, and dwelt particularly upon the introduction of this *rich* stranger into the cottage. "He sleeps at this moment in the room adjoining that in which I now write."

Mental lay long awake. Whispers passed his chamber door. He heard Milwood say, "Give him this letter, and tell him his Elinor never wanted the aid of her Zelotti so much as at the present moment. Say, I expect him most impatiently." Looking from the window, Mental saw her attend a person, in a travelling dress, along the gravel walk to the wicket. Who could this Zelotti be? was now the anxious thought of Mental.

In the meantime word had been sent to Mr. Freeman of his daughter's illness, and the fond parent was in a day or two at the bedside of his child. Almost at the same moment news came that Captain Middleton and Mr. Emery were detected in foul play at cards—the scene was at Margate. Duels were the consequence. Emery received a very severe wound in the head. Middleton had dangerously wounded his antagonist, and had set off immediately for Hamburgh.

The most scrupulous care was taken to prevent a breath of this intelligence reaching the ears of Freeman, who still kept watch beside his daughter. But at about noon the following day, Mr. Drudge, acting partner in the concern of Freeman, Emery & Co., arrived at Ramsgate. He demanded to be instantly admitted to Mr. Freeman.

The rattling of the chaise, the loud talking of Mr. Drudge, and the bustle of the servants, alarmed the whole family, who, with Mr. Freeman himself, were immediately assembled, to inquire the occasion of such a noise. Soon as Mr. Drudge saw Mr. Freeman, he ran to him, and grasping his hand—

"Oh, sir! prepare yourself—prepare yourself—such tidings!—such discoveries!—Good God!"

Mr. Freeman trembled—Mrs. Emery and the ladies

almost fainted—whilst Lord Morley and Mr. Eastwood stood motionless, with a stupid stare of vacancy.

"Is Mr. Emery dead?" exclaimed Barnwell.

"Oh, worse, worse than death—He is a—ruined man!—and much I fear his ruin will extend to more than him. Oh, my dear sir, when I think what *you* must feel!" still grasping Mr. Freeman's hand——

"Ruin!—ruin!" exclaimed the worthy Mr. Freeman; and, placing his hand to his forehead, cried—"Strengthen me, good Heaven!"

Lord Morley and Mr. Eastwood gaped at each other, and the rest of the company; and the latter, at length, proposed taking the ladies into another room, whilst Mr. Drudge explained to Mr. Freeman. Barnwell remained.

"Where is Mr. Emery?" cried Mr. Freeman.

It now became necessary to acquaint him with the affair at Margate; and Mr. Drudge added—"The report of such conduct soon buzzed about London, and no less than ten arrests were that morning issued against him; and notwithstanding the poor man is absolutely delirious from his wound, he has been removed to a spunging-house. In the house at Portland Place there are already four executions; as many in Broad-street, and at the Pavilion. Demands upon demands, to such amounts that astonish me, flock so fast one after another, that to procure bail is impossible; and reparation seems beyond the reach of human hands."

Such was Mr. Drudge's unvarnished tale; and its effect upon the mind of Mr. Freeman may be conceived, but cannot be expressed.

"For *this* have I nourished thee—thou Ingrate!" exclaimed Mr. Freeman.—"Villian!—hypocrite!—smiling, systematic villain!—What must be done! You, too, honest man, the sweat of whose brows have furnished this monster with luxuries—you, too, must be involved in his ruin!"

"A meeting of the creditors must instantly be called!" said Mr. Drudge.

"Oh, just Heaven!" exclaimed Mr. Freeman, "help me to support this trial. At my time of life, must I, after having so many years enjoyed the good opinion of my brother merchants, must I now be reduced to stand downcast before my creditors, and own myself connected with a swindler?" And the tears, big drops, rolled down the old man's cheeks.

"The connexions of Mr. Emery," continued Mr. Drudge, have lately been of the worst kind imaginable. To some gamblers he was in the habit of giving bills for large sums, payable by the firm. Among others, I was shown one, for five hundred pounds which a Jew broker had *discounted*, as he termed it, and which I am certain is a FORGERY. It wants some time of being due. NOW, in all probability, this is not the only one."

Like lightning, the word FORGERY struck the brain of Barnwell.—"I am ill," cried he, and rushed out of the room. In the hall he stood for a few moments; then, with the swiftness of desperation, left the house, uncovered, and ran in a straight direction, for a very considerable distance, without any determination as to where he would fly.

A scene of confusion followed the abrupt departure of Barnwell. Nothing but madness could be devised as the cause of such a proceeding. Servants were despatched in every direction in pursuit of him, and even amidst the general ruin that threatened them, each individual of the family felt a sincere regret for the fate of one so universally esteemed and beloved.

Miss Freeman continuing too ill to be removed, and Mr. Emery being in an unfit situation to receive his wife and daughters, it was settled that the ladies should, for the present remain at Ramsgate; whilst absolute necessity compelled the distracted father of Maria to accompany Mr. Drudge immediately to London.

It was at this critical moment that Sir James Barnwell, accompanied by his clerical friend, Sandall, arrived at Ramsgate, ordered there by the advice of his physician. What a blow to his heart was the tidings

of these disasters! But, (unlike Morley and Eastwood, who, as soon as they heard of the stoppage, hurried away from Ramsgate) the worthy knight at once repaired to the house of distress; nor did the heartfelt sorrow, which seized him on his nephew's account, prevent him from tendering every consolation in his power to the unfortunate Emerys.

The distracted Barnwell, when he fled from home, sought the cottage of Milwood. He entered her presence more like a spectre than a man—his hair dishevelled, his cheeks and lips pale as death. Speechless he tottered towards her, sunk on the floor at her feet, and dropped his head upon her lap. Milwood at once prevailed on him to swallow a cordial, from the effects of which he slept, but uneasily. Milwood, bending over him, heard him murmuring her own name, and that of his mother and sister.

In the meanwhile Mental passed his hours most unpleasantly. His situation became torture. He was placed under the same roof with his own, his only child; but every opportunity of converse which he snatched, all the observations he could form, tended to confirm him more and more in the opinion, that this child was lost to virtue forever! Despairing, therefore, for the success of any attempts towards her reformation, he that morning resolved to remove from the cottage, without making himself known.

Ignorant of those important events which had taken place at Mr. Emery's, he began to murmur at the absence of Barnwell, and hinted his intention of inquiring for him at Mr. Emery's, if he did not call in the course of that morning. This step Milwood determined to prevent.—About noon Zelotti arrived. Mental was in the parlour when he entered, and Milwood introduced them to each other.

The person and manners of this Italian were extremely prepossessing, and in a very few minutes he found means to entangle Mental in a conversation, in spite of the general taciturnity of the latter. Mental was, perhaps, in some degree induced to this conver-

sation by the curiosity he felt concerning Zelotti; but the Italian was too wary to allow the least possible clue to his real character to escape him. Mental perceived, however, that Zelotti was no common man.

The first employment of Zelotti, after a consultation with Milwood, was to assume the disguise of a fisher man, and *reconnoitre* Mr. Emery's late residence. He was admitted to the presence of the almost distracted uncle of Barnwell. His olive complexion helped his disguise, and he spoke English very well.

"I believe I am right," said the impostor; "you are the master, as I take it, of one George Barnwell."

"No, no," cried Sir James, "I am his uncle—where is he?—where is my nephew?"

"That is more than I must tell."

"But you shall be compelled to tell."

"No, sir; I am poor, and roughly finished; but I have never yet, nor I never will, betray my trust."

"But 'tis for his interest, 'tis for his happiness alone, I wish to know. Take me, then, to the poor distracted youth, and he himself will bless you for it to the latest hour of his life."

"It must not be—I have sworn an oath, your honour, a sacred, solemn oath, that I would not utter a word that might lead to his discovery."

"What is the purpose of your errand, then?"

"This, your honour—to say, that he will either come home to-night, or else that he will write a letter; but, being much afraid his absence might be blazed abroad, he wanted much to be assured that his mother nor his uncle were apprized of it."

"His mother and sister are yet ignorant of it; and, if he would return immediately, they might never know it. I have letters to deliver from them; but, being ignorant of their contents, I know not how they might affect him."

"I'll answer for it, they will be the means of hastening his return; besides, your honour, if you were to send them, and some kind message from yourself, I'd back it to the best of my power. Whilst he is at my

hut no harm shall come to him; and either I, or Margery, my dame, have always our eyes upon him. When he leaves us, I'll see, too, that he goes no where but to this house."

"Will you promise to do this—will you, on your oath, promise to do this?" said the knight. "And do you really think he will come to-night?"

"I do, I do," cried Zelotti.

"Then, here, honest fellow, take him these two letters from his mother and sister, and tell him, if all I possess can render him happy, it is his own. Tell him, that, if he will return to me this night, all that has passed shall be kept secret forever; tell him, in short, good man, whatever you think can induce him to return; and, depend on it, your reward shall not be small." (Sir James was untying his purse.)

"Put up your purse, your honour," cried Zelotti; "the pleasure of carrying such a message to heal his poor broken heart, is reward enough to Ned Martin."

He retired.—Sir James's heart was lightened considerably by the hope which this impostor occasioned, and he wrote to his sister-in-law, and his niece, to apprize them of the change in his old friend Mr. Freeman's affairs, and slightly mentioned that his nephew was well; but much employed, in consequence of the unfortunate alteration in the circumstances of his friends.

CHAPTER XII.

Upon the return of Zelotti, conference was held between the subtle Italian and Milwood, the result of which was the following conduct:—

Barnwell had made her chamber his prison. It was nearly dark when Milwood,—confusion and dismay pictured in her countenance,—rushed into the apartment, and locked the door.

"Barnwell!" exclaimed she, "Barnwell! arouse yourself, or we are lost forever!"

The unhappy Barnwell, almost stupified with sorrow, sat on a chair, his legs placed on a window-seat, reclining his head on his hand, like one inanimate.—He noticed nothing that she said. She approached him, took his hand in hers, and gazed full in his face.

"Oh, Milwood! that face—those eyes—were they designed by nature to accomplish such wide ruin? Poor Eliza! poor mother!"

There was such a settled wildness in his eyes, that Milwood doubted, for a moment, whether he was sensible. After some time, a deep sigh was followed by a flood of tears, which seemed greatly to relieve him.

"Come, come, for shame!" said Milwood; "conquer these unmanly vapours; summon the energy of your mind; it is now, Barnwell, you need it. What, tamely yield yourself to a felon's fate—chains, public infamy, and public death! Look at the effects of such conduct on others—Behold the pale, death-like form that gave you life—gaze on her agonies—see how she rends her gray hairs, how she mangles those breasts that have nurtured thee! See, too, a beauteous sister falling, in the bloom of life, a victim to thy disgraceful fate!—while I——"

"Hold, Milwood, as you value my existence!—If thus you paint the horrors that await me, no strength of reason, no suggestions of moral duty, will prevent me from instant suicide. Surely I was born for the accursed purpose of inflicting tortures on those I love—but spare me the painful picture. In my heart, in my brain, the impression of all these horrors is fixed with unutterable anguish!"

"You feel all these horrors, you say; yet who can believe it? You make no single effort to avert them—insensible to the dangers that threaten us, tamely you indulge a fruitless sorrow."

"Is it not *impossible* to escape those dangers?"

"It is possible not to endure them."

"What possible means of avoiding detection can

you devise, Milwood? Is not the forgery discovered? Is it not traced even to Blackmore?"

"Ay, even to Milwood—but what then? Think you that Milwood will surrender up herself to galling fetters, to a public trial, to an *ignominious* death, while this friendly steel is here?" [At these words she exposed the handle of the dagger, which she constantly wore in her bosom.]

She wept, and her whole soul seemed melted into wo. Barnwell, irresolute, was at a loss in what language to address her. She continued—

"If our fates have proved calamities; if evil, following evil, pursues us, how am I to blame? Have I received an interest or pleasure, separate from yours, since that ill-fated hour? And yet I am arraigned as guilty of intentional crimes. Oh, youth! lovely, yet unfortunate, be just, even amid your sufferings. Why have I offered the antidote of death to the miseries that threaten?—because I knew you timid, scrupulously hesitating; when the only means of escaping them are bold, enterprising, and uncommon; such as, indeed, are above the use of beings educated in the prejudices and errors of systems; such as I know you could never be brought to use; and, therefore, we must die!"

"Die!" exclaimed Barnwell; "you—you must die? Oh, God, forbid!—Let us fly—let us fly this instant, Milwood! I begin to see your horrible condition" (putting his hand to his forehead.) "Merciful Heaven!—Milwood, why did *you* concern yourself in the accursed forgery!—Oh, forgive my madness, when I accused you. Where is—where is my friend—where is Townley? I must see him, or it will be too late—perhaps it is already too late to escape our pursuers.—He will give me any sum of money we may want—Let me go to him."

"Alas! my Barnwell," cried Milwood, prepared for this proposal, "hope nothing there. He left the cottage this morning early, as he said, on urgent business, and

will not return till to-morrow: by that period our fate will be decided."

"*Our* fate, Milwood! No, no, *you* must not suffer. On me—on me, just Heaven, pour thy vengeance! But has not my friend left his casket?—I know its value—I know your right to it."

"You talk wildly, my Barnwell! But even had we the right you speak of, we have not the power; the casket is not here."

"Did he not say whither he was gone?"

"No."

"Did he ever converse with you on any subjects besides common ones? Did he ever make any discovery, or throw out any hints?"

"No—no—none—but let us not waste time now in words, when every moment that escapes us brings the crisis of our fate still nearer."

"You are calm, Milwood!—Ah! then, I know your resolution—Give me that dagger."

"No, Barnwell; 'tis the last wreck of hope that's left to cling to."

The distracted youth now raved again—all the endearments of the syren, all the high wrought picturings of memory, burst at once on his imagination. She was every thing to him, in this moment of transportation from himself. All other existence was to him as though it existed not; and to contemplate the destruction of this idol of his soul, or rather the extinction of this essence of his own existence, was beyond the efforts of his reason. He sunk senseless on her bosom.—

"Oh, were there any means, however desperate, however dangerous, by which I might save you, Milwood!" said he, after some time.

"There is a way, Barnwell; but it is a track unmarked by vulgar footsteps: the great of soul alone walk in this path—the votaries of ambition, of revenge, and all the higher, nobler propensities of our nature. Men of low and grovelling impulses tremble at its en-

trance, and turn aside, seeking each little petty avenue of cowardly escape, while those of higher daring boldly tread the paths of blood!"

"Go on," cried Barnwell: "I understand you."

"If he who holds the fatal paper, which is to witness against us to our death—if he and you, Barnwell, were in some retired spot, far from the prying eye of mortals —how would you act?"

"Milwood, there is a desperate meaning in your words—*Know* you *who* holds the bill?"

"I do."

"Is he some villain—some usurious shark, that has long preyed upon the distresses of his fellow-creatures? —Say, is he a father, or a husband? Would his death —Oh, whither am I wandering?"

"In the road to safety—to future years of peace and joy—had you but the courage of a man. You have discovered, Barnwell, the *only* avenue of escape from death. Think on't, man—Does not the law of nature loudly call on you to act? If, in the highway, another meet you with some deadly weapon, and threaten your destruction, what is the impulse nature gives? Here is but trifling difference—An instrument of death —no matter what—is in the hands of one who threatens you, and in you, all who love you, with destruction! If, then, by a blow that nature prompts, you can disarm your foe—Barnwell, do you understand me?"

He had fixed his eyes, which had a deathlike glassy appearance, firmly on Milwood; his hands were clenched tightly together, and rested on his knees.

"Milwood," said he, continuing in the same posture, "Milwood, I have taken a desperate resolve!—Who had dared have told me, a few months ago, that I should prove a murderer! But I shall—ay, you shall live, Milwood, in mirth and jollity: After these hands have done the bloody deed, will we not be merry? Nay, you look grave, my love!"

This was not the precise disposition to which she had aimed to bring him. There was a wildness in his manner, bordering so nearly on insanity, that she

trembled with the apprehension, that he might betray their purpose.

"This is the rant of madness," cried she; "not the decision of courage."

"By Heaven, I'll do it! I have dismissed that troublesome guest that has hitherto daunted my courage—it is fled—fled forever. I have now no conscience but thy voice, my love. Come, let us to action—Where does the old villain dwell?"

"Be more yourself, Barnwell—you rave."

"No, by my soul, I am calm! Come, give me my victim—see, the moon rises, and the hour of foul deeds draws nigh."

Milwood paused—she meditated—she saw his soul wound up to desperation, and ripe for the deed she wished concluded; but, ever wary in her designs, she looked beyond the deed, and saw his state of mind ill calculated for its concealment, when performed. She paused again—she recollected, that there is a crisis in mental operations, and knew, that if she suffered this crisis of desperation to arrive, without accomplishing her end, it never would return. She well knew the state of langour that would succeed it, and, with a boldness of determination, resolved upon the risk. When she had resolved, she took his hands, she kissed them, bathed them with tears, and called him by the dearest title of Saviour.

"Every hour of my future existence will be a gift of thine," said she; "to thee, my saviour, shall I owe all the years of life I may enjoy. But, are you firm, my hero?"

"I am resolved."

"But when you shall hear *who* is the victim, the necessary victim, for whom Fate calls—Oh, then, all my hopes of life will vanish! You will prefer his life to mine, to a mother's, a sister's, to your own!"

"No—no—no," cried he; "were my father living, and in the way 'twixt life and you, I *think*—yes, I *think*, I should, Milwood——!"

"But you have a near relation, who yet lives, Barn-

well—you have an—" (she held his hand grasped tightly in her own) "an—an—uncle!"

"Is it my poor uncle, then?——Oh!"

He struck his head violently.—She suffered him to remain silent a few minutes, and then, in a most tender voice——

"Barnwell, speak to me—tell me—am I to die?"

He threw himself into her arms.

"Live, Milwood, live!—though perdition, everlasting perdition, be the price of your existence!"

From this moment he was lost. The situation of his uncle at Mr. Emery's was made known to him; she persuaded him that the forged bill had passed into his possession; that, ignorant who had forged it, he still held it; and, if he lived, must, in spite of every wish to the contrary, be compelled to appear against them.

* * * * * * *

Sir James Barnwell had just finished a solitary supper, when Barnwell, attended by Zelotti, rung the bell at the gate of the court yard. The pride of Mrs. Emery and her daughters confined them to their chambers; the poor Maria was intrusted to the care of a nurse; and Mr. Sandall was gone to visit a friend at Margate.

The pretended fisherman introduced Barnwell to his rejoicing uncle, who fell on his neck, and embraced him. Barnwell, pale and trembling, seated himself silently on a chair, and supported his head by leaning his elbow on the table. Zelotti, in a whisper to Sir James, observed, that the less notice was taken of him, and the earlier they retired, the better, and then departed. The anguish of the old man, as he looked upon his nephew, was keen indeed.

"You look ill, my nephew; you are fatigued. We will not enter on the cause of your uneasiness to-night; but, if your happiness can be restored by any means in my power, assure yourself of my best endeavours."

"You are very good—yes, you are *truly* good—and that's one comfortable reflection," said Barnwell.

Sir James little suspected the drift of his discourse.

"Have you supped, George?"

"I have not eat a long while, sir; my appetite is gone, quite gone—but I can drink—what have you there, wine?"

The wine was on the table; he drank a bumper greedily.

"You don't inquire after your mother, or your sister, George."

"Oh, true? you're right — my mother — ah, my mother—and Eliza—poor girl!—Come, sir, won't you take some wine?"

Sir James was alarmed at his wild manner. Barnwell poured out another bumper and swallowed it.

"How much does it want to one o'clock?" said he.

"'Tis not twelve," said Sir James.

At that instant Mr. Sandall entered the room. Sir James intimated silence to him. Barnwell looked at him, but did not notice him.

"What an altered house is this!" said Barnwell. "No more merriment!—Well, I must to bed—and you Mr. Sandall, being a divine, will pray for us all—Uncle, do you pray every night?"

Sir James, who conceived his brain injured, humoured him, and answered him—"Always, George."

"I am glad of that," said he; "you are a righteous man, and your prayers are heard."

He rung for the servant. At the door he turned round, and stood with his eyes fixed for some time on his uncle, then retired, saying, as he left the room, "God bless you, sir—good night."

When the man had attended him to his chamber door, which was one, among several, in a long gallery ——"There poor Miss Freeman sleeps—does she not, Sam?"

"Yes, sir."

"And in that room, I suppose, my uncle sleeps."

"No, sir, the other gentleman has that room—Sir James lies in this *here*, next to yours."

"Does that clock, that stands at the end of the gallery, strike the hours, Sam?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do the lamps at each end of the gallery burn all night?"

"Yes, sir, till near daylight."

"Good night, Sam."

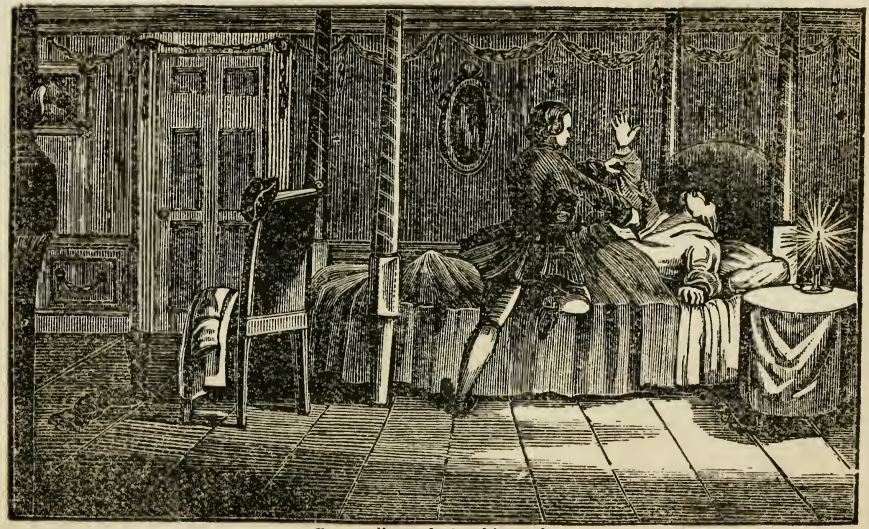
He retired to his chamber. The clock struck twelve. "One hour more!" exclaimed he. He paced about the chamber in agony of thought. "Hush!" murmured he to himself; "I hear his aged footsteps—he passes my door—he enters his chamber. Will he lock the door?—no—he dreads the danger of fire, and rather trusts to man's mercy than a senseless element! Hark! he prays—Good God! he prays for me—even me! Listen!—'Restore his peace of mind.' Oh, poor martyr! that's a vain petition—Alas, Milwood! what have I sworn to do?—But you cannot both live? Why, oh, why was I permitted to see this hour!—Hark! the bed creaks—he lays his aged limbs to rest—never, never more to rise!"

All was now perfect silence in the house, so that the dashing of the ocean's waves were heard distinctly, the windows of that range of chambers overlooking the sea. When he parted from Milwood, she had furnished him with a dagger, and gave him a small packet, with an injunction not to open it till the bell tolled one. This dagger he now drew from his bosom, and placed it, with the packet, on the table.

His reflections now grew more and more tormenting; his resolution was a hundred times shaken, and raised again by the memory of Milwood. When the idea of her public death rushed across his brain, madness nerved his arm, and he often grasped the dagger in a state of phrensy.

In this horrible conflict the hour passed away; the clock in the gallery struck one. A chilly sweat dewed his whole frame—his blood shot like a bolt of ice in to his heart. With a trembling hand he opened the packet; it contained a most animating likeness of Milwood, in miniature, and fully answered the purpose she intended. A small scroll of paper contained, in her

own hand writing, these words:—"If another hour elapses, and the deed is not performed, you may gaze on the resemblance of Milwood, but will never behold the original alive." He gazed on the portrait; he read the scroll again; again he contemplated the miniature—he kissed it with fervour—his brain grew inflamed—imagination rioted—He kissed the miniature again—he placed it in his bosom, grasped the dagger, and, throwing off his slippers, opened his chamber door. Not a breath moved along the gallery—he stood trembling for a few moments, fearfully gazing around him—his shadow on the floor startled him—he shuddered. Once more he drew the portrait from his bosom, and looked on it by the light reflected from the lamp. Summoning a desperate effort, he made two or three strides, and found himself in his uncle's chamber. He closed the door after him, and approached the bed-side. A chamber lamp burned in the fire place; by this light as he leaned against the foot of the bed, he perceived his uncle slept. At that moment he fancied, that he heard a footstep in the gallery—he listened, and was confirmed it was so. He fixed his eyes upon the door in horrid dread of a detection, and half concealed the dagger in his bosom, still holding the candle. No one entered—all was again silent. Once more he slowly drew the dagger forth, and once more turned his eyes upon his sleeping uncle. The dim, faint light, emitted from the lamp, just served to discover his tranquil features. His lips were closed in a smile, that indicated peaceful slumbers. As he contemplated this scene, a deep groan pierced the ears of Barnwell: frozen with horror, he dared not turn his head towards the gallery, whence it seemed to issue, but remained fixed as a statue. In another moment a voice, softly, but distinctly, uttered—"I'll sit all night on his cold, cold grave!" He fancied it was the voice of his sister. The dagger fell from his senseless hand, and he clung to the pillars of the bedstead for support. Waked by the noise and motion, his uncle started up. Barnwell, instigated by a sudden impulse. in which fear was an



Barnwell murdering his uncle.

ingredient, snatched up the dagger, sprung upon the breast of the venerable old man, and plunged its fatal point deep in his heart! One groan only preceded his dissolution!

The moment the fatal blow was struck, remorse was kindled, with all its horrors, in the breast of Barnwell; a remorse too powerful for words or action; it was a consuming fire kindled in the centre of his heart. In a few moments the same voice he had heard before exclaimed—"In heaven he will be mine, for Milwood cannot come to heaven." Roused to madness, he rushed like lightning to the door, opened it without regard to the noise he made, and beheld, sitting in her night gown at his own room door, Maria Freeman. This amiable and afflicted girl, still the victim of concealed affection, grew hourly worse. Her mind constantly fixed on the object of her love, was now impressed with the notion of his death, and her attendant having fallen asleep, the lovely maniac had left her bed under the impression of visiting his tomb. The noise and his appearance caused her to utter the most violent shrieks, which brought Mr. Sandall and the servants to be witnesses to a scene of the utmost horror! Barnwell, taking the advantage of their confusion, burst through them all, and fled, with incredible speed, towards the cottage.

Urged on by an instinctive sense of danger, scarcely knowing the route he took, and without bestowing a thought on the certain consequences of his sudden flight, he pursued his way. Each step he took, he trembled; even the falling leaf, that floated in the air, alarmed him. As he approached the sea, the roaring of the water appalled his guilty soul with terror. If, for a minute, he raised his eyes from the ground, the most horrid images floated before them. His uncle's mangled, bleeding corpse, his father's angry ghost, the very torments of the damned, racked his imagination! The gloomy aspect of the heavens aided the force of these guilt-born terrors, and rendered his situation horrible beyond expression!

With difficulty he at length found the wicket gate of the cottage—It was locked, nor could all the noise he was capable of making gain him admission. Dreading to remain unhoused, he endeavoured to explore an entrance at the back of the garden, by climbing up to the arbour from the sands. The tide was flowing rapidly in, and he found he had no time to lose. By perseverance, spurred on by the desperation of his mind, he gained, at length, a footing on a part of the cliff that overhung the sea, and was within a few paces of the arbour.

Exhausted with fatigue, and overpowered by the conflicting exercises of his mind, he threw himself down on the rock, with a groan of agony. The fever of the soul became exchanged for a most awful languor —he dared not to think. The roaring of the waters underneath at length aroused him, and the horrors of his situation flashed once more across his imagination.

At that moment, rising from the ground, he felt strongly impelled to plunge from the precipice, on which he stood, into the gulf of waters; but, almost at the same instant, the murmuring of approaching whispers startled him, and arrested his attention. It was too dark to discern their faces; but he could distinguish a man and woman plainly, as the former carried a lantern in his hand. They approached the edge of the cliff, and appeared to make towards the spot where he stood. A little to the right there was a spot, where the chalk had fallen away some feet in depth, and left a hollow space. Here he crept and concealed himself. In a few moments they were close to the place of his concealment—a voice, which he too well knew, now struck his ear—'twas Milwood's.

"Well," said she, "how is the tide?"

"Coming in," said the man, who was Zelotti; "but it won't do this tide; it will be break of day ere there be sufficient depth of water."

"Cursed delay!" cried Milwood; "what must be done with the body, then?"

"Let it remain in the sack, under the seat, in the arbour, till another night."

"That might do, if we were certain of remaining here; but I dread the morning, Zelotti. Fool that I was, to trust a work of such a nature to his hands. If Barnwell should be detected in the act, or by his weakness discover it when done, we must fly instantly, and then old Townley's corpse would be discovered, and his murder clearly traced to me."—(How poor Barnwell shuddered!)

"That's true," replied Zelotti. "Let me consider: as there are no marks of violence upon his person, suppose we strip him; the effects of the poison, in swelling the body, may pass well enough for the same effects produced by drowning; so that if it floats, and is discovered in the morning, there would be no ground of suspicion."

"Quick, then, about it!" cried Milwood; "there has been too much delay.—O, Zelotti! if Barnwell's heart were but moulded like our own, what a glorious harvest should we reap!—But my soul misgives me—I fear his tenderness, his foolish remorse—Would this night were all over!"

They had now retired out of the hearing of Barnwell. He had, however, heard enough to petrify his soul with horror.—It was plain that Milwood had poisoned her father!—Language is not equal to the task of describing what now passed in his agonized bosom!—Dreading to meet them, he was compelled to keep his situation. Sooner than he imagined, they returned, and in a few moments the awful sound smote his ear of the fall of poor Mental's corpse into its grave of billows!—He could not check a deep groan at that instant.

"Did you hear any thing?" said Zelotti.

"No," said Milwood; "*you* are not surely turning superstitious!"

"I am sure I heard a groan," said Zelotti.

"Fancy—fancy, man," cried she—"Come, we have

work to do—Peace to old Townley—now for his treasures."

They bent their way towards the arbour. Barnwell followed them with his eye. In their hurry they forgot the ladder by which they descended from the window of the arbour. He noticed this neglect, and, waiting a considerable time, his first impulse was to ascend the ladder; but he checked it, and continued wandering near the spot till break of day.

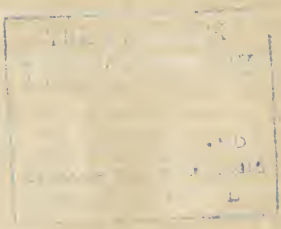
The tortures inflicted by his conscience became almost insupportable, and he once again resolved to die.

At the very moment, however, of acting upon this dreadful resolution, an indescribable terror seized him, and turned him from his purpose. The conviction of a future state was so deeply impressed upon his mind, that, though surrounded by misery, he dared not to plunge, uncalled, into eternity. Again, when the horrible consequences of his crime rushed in force upon his imagination, he felt almost irresistibly impelled to escape them by the only means left—the guilt of suicide!

Thus wretchedly passed the hours of darkness: now the torments of his situation drove him almost to self-murder; and now the dread of what another world might prove, deterred him from the crime. Nor was the recent scene he had witnessed the least part of his present wretchedness—sorrow for the fate of Mental, at any common period, would have powerfully afflicted him; but when the incontrovertible evidence of his own sight and hearing proved to him the real character of Milwood, surprise, agony, and despair, took possession of his soul.

Such was the state of mind in which, early in the morning, Milwood and Zelotti discovered the poor lost Barnwell. Anxiety respecting the body of the murdered Mental brought them to observe if the tide had thrown it on the shore. When Milwood first saw Barnwell, he was kneeling, his hands clasped, and his eyes were fixed on the rising sun.

Milwood and Zelotti discovering Barnwell after the murder.



"Amazement!" exclaimed she. "Barnwell! Barnwell!—Tell me, do my senses deceive me?"

Barnwell surveyed her with a wild, inquiring gaze, but spoke not.

"Answer me," said she, "does he live?"

"In heaven!" said Barnwell, shaking his head, and showing some blood upon his hands.

"Why then are you here?" said she; "you should have remained in your chamber, as I directed you, to avoid suspicion.—Where is the dagger?—where is the miniature?"

"By his bleeding corpse!" said Barnwell, solemnly.

"Fool!—madman!—Did you *intend* detection?—My portrait left in the room!—perhaps my letter too.—Zelotti, we must fly—Away—away!—and leave this whimpering boy to the fate his folly merits."

She cast a look of contemptuous rage on him, and walked swiftly towards the arbour, followed by Zelotti.

Barnwell, roused from his stupor of misery by this conduct, pursued them, exclaiming, as he went—"Milwood—Milwood—hear me!" At the foot of the ladder he seized her hand eagerly—"Lost—lost woman!—Why am I still anxious concerning you?—Why, even after you have driven me to perdition, do I still love you?—Why is it, that, though I know you a murderer, I cannot—cannot detest you? O, then, listen to me, Milwood; and, instead of attempting to escape the just punishment of our crimes, let us surrender ourselves to death, as the only atonement in our power, and devote the few hours we may live in preparing for eternity!"

"Canting babe—preaching infant;" cried Milwood, scornfully. "Know, fool, that she, to whom you preach, is of a nature above indulging such dreams, as haunt children of prejudice, and dupes of priestcraft, like yourself. She scoffs your counsel, and despises you for offering it. To you, and such as you, she leaves it to bend the neck submissively to laws and ordinances. Her life is her all; she dreams of no future

worlds, nor dreads accounts hereafter. On such, the puny fears of others, she builds her towering projects, and would not scruple, if she had the power, to hurl yon blazing orb of light from its fixed centre to destroy whole systems that opposed her purpose."

"Can human nature fall so low?" cried Barnwell; "can that which we are taught to believe emanates from Deity itself become infernal?"

"Who is this Deity you speak of? Where is his power? If he exists, why did he suffer you, a villain, maddened by lust, to murder sleeping innocence? Fool!—fool!—fool!—Away, Zelotti."

"Yet, one moment, hold," cried Barnwell, "Where is my friend—where is Townley? Oh, what must be your agony, Milwood, when you hear, that Townley, he whose murdered corpse, last night, you yielded to the deep, was—your father?"

"Already is the mighty secret known!" said she. "I know he was my father—I own, too, that these hands mixed and administered the dose that poisoned him! Where was the Deity you talk of *then?* Why did not his power, if he possess it, prevent so foul a deed? I knew not, *at the moment*, that he was my father: the contents of his casket, and his papers told me, that he had played a character that he was not in reality, and he has fallen in consequence. 'Tis possible he might have lived, but for his deception."

Barnwell was petrified with horror and astonishment!

"In a few hours," continued Milwood, as she ascended the ladder, "some dungeon may immerse us, if we remain, Zelotti. Come, then, nor let us waste the present opportunity."

As she uttered the last words, she entered the arbour by the window. In the same instant she shrieked violently, and three men rushed down the ladder, from the window, and secured Barnwell and Zelotti. The ravings of Milwood were too horrible to describe. During their absence from the cottage, Mr. Sandall, attended by several of the domestics, and conducted

by the information found in Barnwell's papers, had arrived there, and forced the outer gates. As the garden door was open, they had just entered the arbour, when the voice of Barnwell arrested their attention; and concluding, from the replies of Milwood, that she was returning, they stationed themselves in such a manner as to secure her when she entered. The criminals were immediately conveyed before a magistrate, and commited to prison. Milwood continued to rave. Zelotti loaded her with reproaches; but Barnwell silently hung down his head, and endeavoured to conceal the tears, that bedewed his pallid cheeks.

CHAPTER XIII.

Night approached—Milwood, who, during the whole day, had sought, in vain, an opportunity of self-destruction, at length, overcome by the violent exertions of despair, sunk on her pillow, and slept. Two women, who were appointed to watch in her apartment, soon after midnight, were aroused by the violent shrieks which she uttered in her sleep. Pierced to the heart by her exclamations, which seemed to indicate the most excruciating tortures of her mind, they were yet too superstitious to awake her. Several inhabitants of the prison, alarmed by her dreadful cries, entered the apartment, and stood trembling around the bed of the despairing Milwood. Big drops of sweat rolled down her cheeks, her eyes were half open, her teeth gnashed horribly, and her whole frame was strongly convulsed.

At length, starting up in the bed, she seized the hand of a by-stander, exclaiming, in a voice of horror—— "Am I in hell?—Oh, torment me not, my father!—do not *you* inflict the tortures!—Barnwell—Barnwell—

end my miseries!—Oh, they have torn my flesh with burning pincers!—Now they are shooting sparks of fire in my eyes—scorpions fasten on my breast—and see, my murdered father fixes his ghastly eyes on me! —Barnwell I own the deed:—thy uncle's bleeding ghost approaches!—Save me—save me!—See, they bring more brands of fire—showers of fire descend! —Oh, my heart burns—it burns—and yet I do not die!"

A shivering fit now seized her, and she awoke. Casting her eyes wildly round her, by degrees she recollected her situation. Among the prisoners, who stood near her, was a clergyman confined for debt. Viewing the horrors of her mind, he was prompted to offer her some consolation.

"Unhappy woman!" said he, "see the sad consequences of guilt!—As yet thy terrors are only imaginary; may they prove salutary, and lead you to seek, by heart-felt penitence, that Christian hope of mercy which alone can calm your mind!—Are you willing I should pray with you?"

She fixed her eyes upon him—"Mercy!" cried she "Penitence!—Pray for me!—To whom?"

"To your Almighty Judge!"

"There is not an Almighty Judge—'Tis false, old man. There is not—cannot—no—no—there cannot be another world—or if there is, why am I tortured with the thought of it—when, if there is—I—I Oh! no —no—do not say there is another world!"

"Surely, most surely, there is," said the good old man, with a vehemence that made her tremble.

She struck her hand violently against her head ——"If, indeed, there should," exclaimed she—"horrible thought!—I dare not think!—Oh, if you have any pity for my wretched lot, give me some potent draught, some cordial, that will drown all sense of what is past —all dread of what may come!"

The worthy minister, who truly merited the title of a Christian priest, exerted every effort to soothe the workings of despair. He dismissed the idle gazers

from the room, and was in the act of kneeling to offer up a prayer, when the poor object of his solicitude shrieked violently, and implored him to desist.

"'Tis torture—torture—torture!" cried she; "I am accursed, and I hate all good!"

Finding his attentions increased her despair in her present frame of mind, he desisted, in the hope of a more tranquil moment. By his advice, they permitted her to take some wine, and she, once more, seemed to sleep. But a few minutes, however, had elapsed, ere she awoke again, under the same impressions of horror!

Mr. Elderton, the clergyman, had not left the room, but had employed himself in silent prayer. Her despair now rose to fury; her expressions were horribly blasphemous, and assistance was necessary to keep her in her bed. Her exertions were fatal. In the paroxysms of her despair she burst a blood vessel; the blood gushed rapidly from her mouth, and, notwithstanding every possible assistance was instantly procured, before the sun arose, despairing she expired!

At break of day, upon visiting Zelotti's apartment, the keeper of the prison discovered he had taken poison the preceding night. He had not undressed himself, and his corpse lay a dreadful spectacle, stretched upon the floor. A scrap of paper lay near him, on which were scrawled with a pencil these words, barely legible, supposed to have been written after he had drunk the poison:—"Milwood—*there is a God!* defy him not!—Zelotti."

The worthy clergyman, who had witnessed the dreadful death of Milwood, influenced by the pure motives of Christian charity, determined to visit the fallen victim of her wiles. Sad change had marked the face of Barnwell. The horror of guilt had marred one of the finest countenances nature ever formed. No more the rosy glow of health adorned his cheek; no more the smile of innocence and peace hung on his lips; no longer the tranquillity, that once dwelt in his bosom, beamed from his eyes! Bitter misery had traced

its sickly characters over all his wasted form. At the entrance of Mr. Elderton he started, but still kept his eyes on the floor.

"I have intruded," said Mr. Elderton, "upon hours which, I hope, are devoted to penitence, to announce to you the melancholy end of —"

"Oh, God!" cried Barnwell, clasping his hands together, "my mother—I have slain my mother!"

"No—no—no—no," said Mr. Elderton, eager to undeceive him; "I speak of the unhappy partners of your guilt, who are now no more. The wretched woman died by the bursting of a blood vessel in a paroxysm of despair, and the man has poisoned himself!"

"God forgive them!" cried Barnwell, "God forgive them!—Poor Milwood!"

Even in his present awful situation, a pang shot through his heart, when he heard she was gone forever!

"You mentioned a mother, sir," said Mr. Elderton; "have you a mother?"

"Oh, spare me, I beseech you, whoever you are, spare my poor bursting heart the anguish of that thought!"

At that moment the door was thrown open, and Mrs. Barnwell, Eliza, and Mr. Sandall, were in the room. The rumour of Barnwell's absconding by some means had reached them, and they immediately followed Sir James to Ramsgate. Soon as the wretched mother saw the object which guilt had rendered her son, when attempting to meet her his fetters grated on her ears, overcome by the horrid vision, she sunk senseless on the floor. Eliza fainted on the bosom of her brother, and the prison rung with the imprecations of Barnwell on his own guilty head!

By the direction of Mr. Sandall, whose folly had permitted the interview, they were torn asunder, and conveyed home to the house that had been Mr. Emery's. The shock which Mrs. Barnwell had received was severe, and its effects, even when her senses returned, confined her to her bed, and rendered the attendance

of a physician necessary. Eliza, who loved her brother almost to adoration, suffered an inconceivable pain of heart; but her youth enabled her to sustain the blow with less injury to her health, than their unhappy parent: an alarming attack of the asthma, to which she was subject, occasioned serious apprehensions of her life. Though the dutiful and affectionate Eliza would not quit her bed-side, she yet divided her painfully anxious thoughts between the sick couch of her parent, and the sad destiny of her brother.

In the mean time, Barnwell struggled to meet his fate with resignation; and if, at times, the horrors that surrounded him opened an avenue for thoughts of suicide, the truly pious Elderton was constantly at hand to administer the consolations of hope to his despair.

Some days passed, during which the remains of Sir James Barnwell were conveyed to his late seat, and interred. Mrs. Barnwell remained confined to the bed of sickness, and very slender hope was entertained of her recovery.

The unfortunate victim of unlimited confidence, Mr. Freeman, had received from the numerous and injured creditors of his house that discriminating generosity, for which the merchants of London are celebrated in every part of the globe. He received an immediate and full discharge, upon assigning over all his estates, for which an annuity of six hundred pounds, for his own life and that of his daughter, were liberally settled upon them by the unanimous voice of the creditors, in opposition only to his own sincere wishes to the contrary. Mr. Drudge likewise experienced their liberality; but the exasperation of the majority of the creditors was fully displayed in their conduct to Emery, who, abandoned by his titled friends, was left literally destitute, and being unable to procure his certificate, the vengeance of several pursued him so far as to terminate the future prospects of his existence with the gloomy evils of confinement.

Such was the situation of his affairs when Mr. Free-

man returned to Ramsgate, after the funeral of his old friend Sir James, who had left him his executor. The greatest part of his estates were bequeathed to his wretched nephew, and, in failure of issue, to his sister and her descendants. Very handsome provision was made for Mrs. Barnwell and Eliza, and, excepting a few complimentary legacies, no part of his property was bequeathed out of the family of his brother. The horrid deed of Barnwell received a still deeper tint of horror by the benevolent intentions thus displayed.

Not the combined wealth of worlds is able to eradicate the canker speck of guilt, or prevent that course of consequences which nature has decreed. Never, perhaps, was the insufficiency of wealth to make the heart happy, more powerfully proved than in the miserable Barnwell!

As the awful day of public trial drew near, the channels of grief flowed in more painful violence through the hearts of this most wretched family. The good and tender-hearted Freeman sympathized deeply with the mourners, and stole occasionally a thought from the melancholy image of his beloved daughter, bereft of reason, to mingle sorrow with them.

Barnwell had particularly requested to be alone, and peremptorily refused the visits of all but the pious Elderton. By these means he gradually prepared his mind for those awful scenes which he was shortly to encounter. Eliza, whose mind was considerably above the common level, calling the energies of reason and the hopes of religion to her aid, thus tempered the sensibility of her heart to sustain the miseries that pressed heavily upon her.

The solemn moment now arrived, that placed Barnwell at the bar of temporal justice. The court was crowded with spectators, and, as his fatal story was generally known, there was scarcely an individual present, whose eye did not testify the compassion of his heart. The pale and trembling culprit pleaded guilty in a voice barely audible! The judge pronounced the awful sentence of death in the usual words,

at the conclusion of which Barnwell exclaimed—"Oh, God!" placed his hands before his eyes, and was removed from the bar. He was conveyed from court to the cell appropriated to the wretched victims of death. He remained in prison, till the hour of suffering, of shame, of death arrived, and having penitently yielded to the consequences of his crimes, his liberated spirit winged its trembling flight to the bright throne of mercy!

The pangs a mother felt at this sad catastrophe who can describe! Happily, they were short—soon the welcome herald, Death, arrived, and changed those temporal scenes, a son's crimes had rendered painful, for views of bliss no clouds can ever darken! Maria, too, fell, like a blighted blossom, to the earth, and with her last sigh mingled the name of Barnwell.

The worthy Mr. Freeman met the event with calm, yet heart-felt sorrow. The painful vicissitudes of fortune, reserved for this, the evening of his life, had bowed his mind; and having stripped him of this his last hold on earthly bliss, he endured, with resignation, an existence of tranquillity, almost without a hope or an anxiety!

Eliza, the sister of Barnwell, became his charge, and if ever a temporal concern floated in his mind, it was on her account. By the recent sad events, she acquired the very large property of her late uncle, and retired with her guardian to his residence. Sorrow oft visited her in this retirement, when memory mused on melancholy scenes gone by. Yet Eliza struggled with regret: she had imbibed some early lessons of sound and pure philosophy, the advantages of which now shone conspicuous.

THE END.

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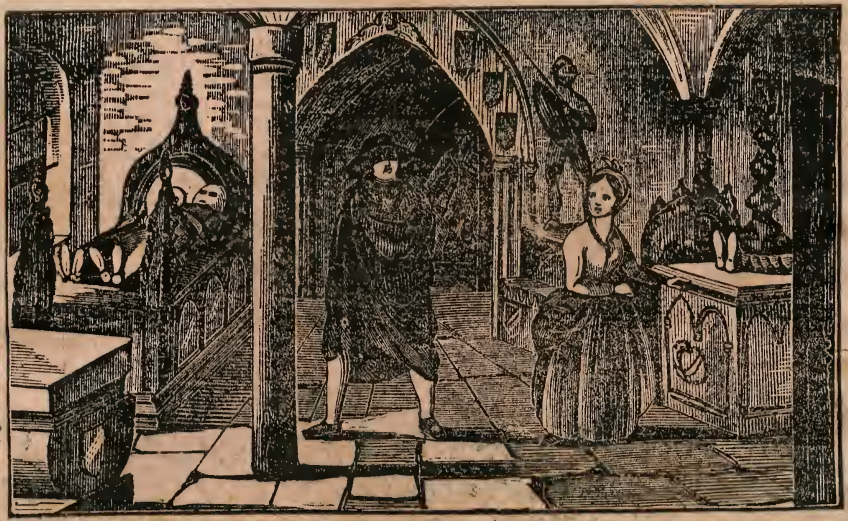

George and his sister visit the Abbey. See page 12.

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